

**148  
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**DEDICATED TO IMPROVING YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY SKILLS**

Issue 106

# Digital SLR Photography

**PRO TUITION**

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*Are you ready to...*

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***Tested & Rated:*** Canon EOS 750D + ND Grads + Sigma 150–600mm





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WELCOME TO THE SEPTEMBER 2015 issue of *Digital SLR Photography*. We've dedicated the majority of this issue to techniques that you can shoot outdoors while the good weather and long days are still with us, so we encourage you to get out and make the most of it! The range of topics and techniques we've covered this issue are pretty extensive; we've a mix of short, sharp tips that deliver great results through to more involved, expert tutorials. Wildlife enthusiasts will benefit from the advice offered by Ross Hoddinott and Ben Hall in our *Ultimate Guide* (page 64), with further information provided in our tutorial for shooting puffins (page 32) and our *Photo Workshop* (page 50). If you're looking to improve your portraits, we show you how to capture flattering results in open shade (page 45) as well as share with you how three experts edit one portrait to give different looks in our *Raw Challenge* on page 83. If that was not enough to keep you busy for the month ahead, there are several other technique guides covering everything from close-ups to recording motion in landscapes, plus inspirational interviews with leading pros and expert reviews of the latest kit. We hope the advice helps you improve your picture-taking skills. All the best!

**Daniel Lezano** Editor



## Join a growing community

OVER HALF A MILLION FOLLOWERS AND GROWING! Get online and interact with the experts at *Digital SLR Photography*. You can follow us on Facebook ([facebook.com/digitalslrphoto](http://facebook.com/digitalslrphoto)), tweet us on Twitter (@digitalslrphoto), join us on Flickr ([flickr.com/groups/digitalslrphoto](http://flickr.com/groups/digitalslrphoto)) or email us ([dslrfeedback@dennis.co.uk](mailto:dslrfeedback@dennis.co.uk)) to keep up to date with all that's going on in photography.



## ON THIS MONTH'S COVER...

This month's beautiful cover image was captured by professional landscape photographer and regular contributor Helen Dixon, and shows Godrevy Island, off the Cornish coast. For an expert insight into the most photogenic locations in North Cornwall, turn to page 25.



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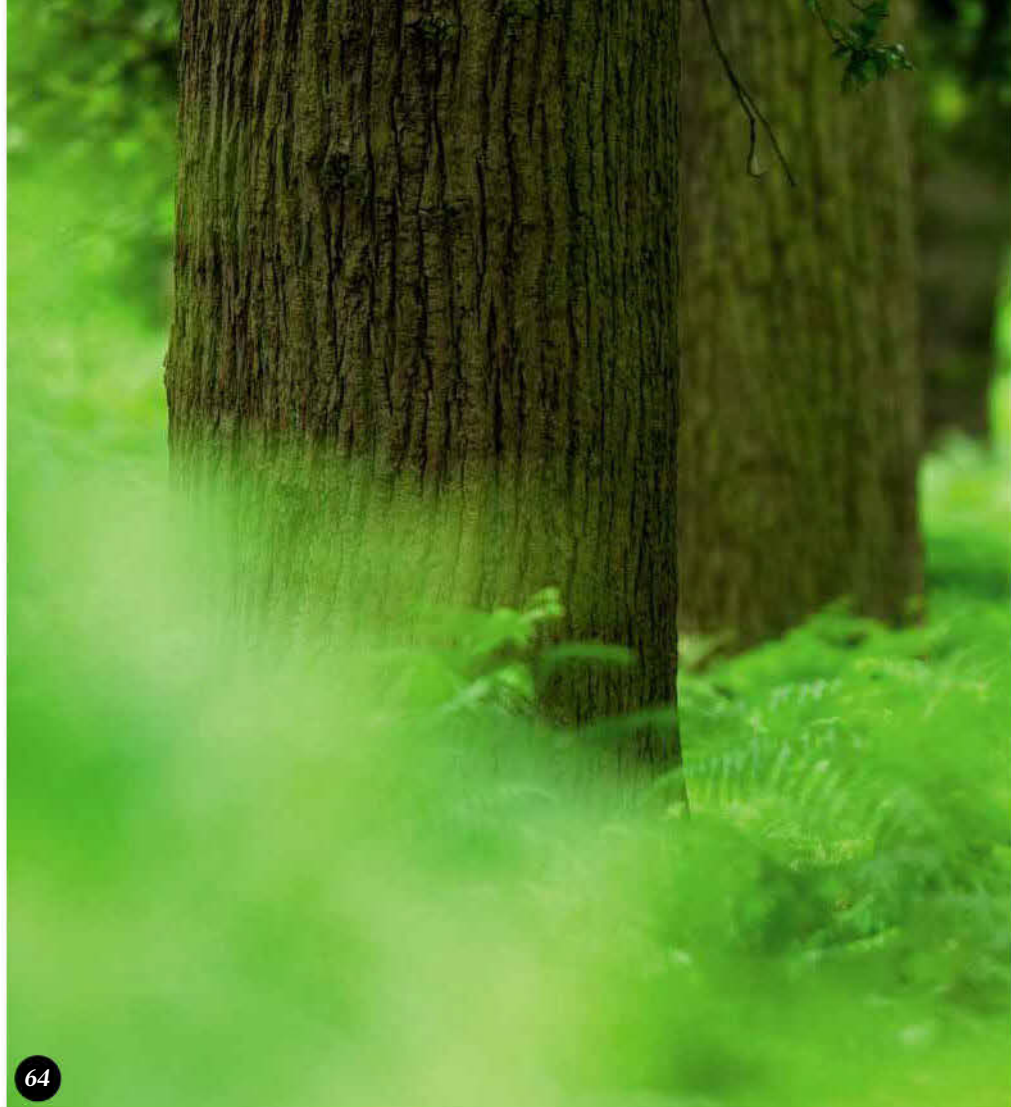
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## CONTRIBUTING THIS MONTH...



### **Daniel Lezano**

With over 30 years' experience as an enthusiast SLR photographer and 20 years on photo magazines, editor Lezano is as passionate as ever about photography, in particular portraits.



### **Caroline Schmidt**

With extensive experience as a magazine journalist, contributing editor Caroline is passionate about photography and delivering an inspiring magazine each month.



### **Jordan Butters**

With a finger always on the pulse of all things photography, Jordan turns his hand to most things: he's our social media master, features guru and talented pro photographer.



### **Ross Hoddinott OUTDOOR**

He's not only an award-winning nature photographer, a leading expert in landscape and wildlife photography, he's a top tutor, too. [rosshoddinott.co.uk](http://rosshoddinott.co.uk)



### **Ben Hall NATURE**

A renowned wildlife photographer, author and tutor, Ben applies his expert knowledge to help improve your wildlife photography skills. [benhallphoto.com](http://benhallphoto.com)



### **Lee Frost LANDSCAPE & TRAVEL**

A long-standing regular contributor, Lee is a fountain of knowledge when it comes to shooting landscapes and delivering expert tutorials. [leefrost.co.uk](http://leefrost.co.uk)



### **Adam Burton LANDSCAPES**

A highly successful landscape photographer, regular contributor Adam Burton is the author of the photography book *The Dorset Coast*. [adam-burton.co.uk](http://adam-burton.co.uk)



### **Paul Ward PORTRAITS**

A commercial portrait photographer, Paul handles editing clients' work daily and shares his approach in this month's *Raw Talent* article. [paulward.net](http://paulward.net)



### **Brett Harkness PORTRAITS**

You either want to be photographed by him or shoot like him. A master of portraits, fashion and now the circus! Read about his latest shoot here. [brettharknessphotography.com](http://brettharknessphotography.com)



### **Stefan Hefele LANDSCAPES**

When it comes to photographing mountains, Stefan is the master – he shares his story and beautiful images from his latest trip to The Alps. [stefan-hefele.de/en](http://stefan-hefele.de/en)



### **Richard Hopkins TESTS**

With over 30 years' experience testing cameras on photography magazines, Richard's one of the UK's leading technical experts on putting photo kit through its paces.



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# Portfolio

## *Eternity*

by Jatenipat Ketpredit

[500px.com/Jkboy\\_Jatenipat](https://500px.com/Jkboy_Jatenipat)

"While I was in Torres del Paine National Park in the Patagonian region of Chile, I looked for a new perspective of this famous mountain, Los Cuernos, which translates into 'the horns'. This little stream attracted me but, as at first the mountain was covered by clouds, I had to wait for two hours until it cleared to reveal this beautiful view."

Nikon D810 with NIKKOR AF-S 16-35mm f/4G ED VR lens.  
Exposure: 1/5sec at f/16 (ISO 100).









### ***Frozen Throne*** by Jatenipat Ketpredit

500px.com/Jkboy\_Jatenipat

(Above) "After a storm, this entire area was covered by fresh snow. The waterfall in the foreground was nearly frozen solid. I was visiting Iceland and knew I had to shoot the famous Kirkjufell before I left. Fortunately, I was presented with a beautiful sky that helped me create a different shot from others I'd seen of this location."

Nikon D800E with AF-S16-35mm f/4G lens. Exposure: One second at f/16 (ISO 100).

### ***Castle of Darkness*** by Jatenipat Ketpredit

(Centre left) "I stopped my car at a petrol station near the village of Vik in Iceland to find a nice view to shoot. The sky had been brooding all day when suddenly the cloud broke just enough to let a slither of dramatic light through. I grabbed my camera, jumped out of the car and quickly took this shot before the light was gone."

Nikon D800E with AF-S24-70mm f/2.8G lens. Exposure: 1/2sec at f/18 (ISO 100).

### ***Divinity*** by Jatenipat Ketpredit

(Below left) "This was taken at Los Glaciares National Park in Santa Cruz Province, Argentina. I was trekking from El Chalten to Laguna Torre when I found this stream near Cerro Torre. I thought that this landscape would be fantastic at sunrise, so I made a base and camped out for the night. The results did not disappoint me."

Nikon D810 with AF-S16-35mm f/4G lens. Exposure: 1/8sec at f/16 (ISO 100).

### ***Gorgeous Red Head*** by Thom H

500px.com/Thomh

(Right) "This image was taken in my studio in Paris, against a grey seamless paper background. I used a Sekonic flash meter to obtain the right exposure and camera settings. Rather than use a burst of flash, my model, Aurélie, was instead lit by the modelling light from a single studioflash inside a 70cm beauty dish, with a reflector below for fill."

Nikon D4 with NIKKOR AF-S85mm f/1.4G lens. Exposure: 1/125sec at f/2 (ISO 250).











## **Butterfly Garden** by Samantha Goss

[www.facebook.com/SamanthaGossPhoto](http://www.facebook.com/SamanthaGossPhoto)

(Top left) "This image took a year to plan and execute because of the different elements involved. The tide mattered the most because at this location you can't walk on the beach at high tide. I wanted to shoot in flat lighting with a low tide so watched the moon's cycles to predict when and what times the tide would be low for the image."

Canon EOS 7D with Canon EF 28-135mm f/3.5-5.6 IS USM lens. Exposure: 1/200sec at f/5.6 (ISO 200).

## **Façade** by Samantha Goss

(Above left) "The concept behind this image came from observing the actions and emotions that people hide everyday. Are you someone who can swim without the mask you're hiding behind? This was shot in a swimming pool using an underwater housing and was a real challenge as posing was difficult. After much persistence and effort, we finally managed to capture an image that told a story."

Canon EOS 7D with Canon EF 28-135mm f/3.5-5.6 IS USM lens. Exposure: 1/160sec at f/5.6 (ISO 400).

## **Imaginary** by Samantha Goss

(Top right) "This image is based on one of my favourite songs from my childhood by Amy Lee. Unfortunately, depression is something I've dealt with my whole life. This song represents wanting to get away into my own world. I found a piece of empty land where the sun sat behind the tree line, and took these handmade paper roses I'd been working on for months. It came together exactly how I wanted."

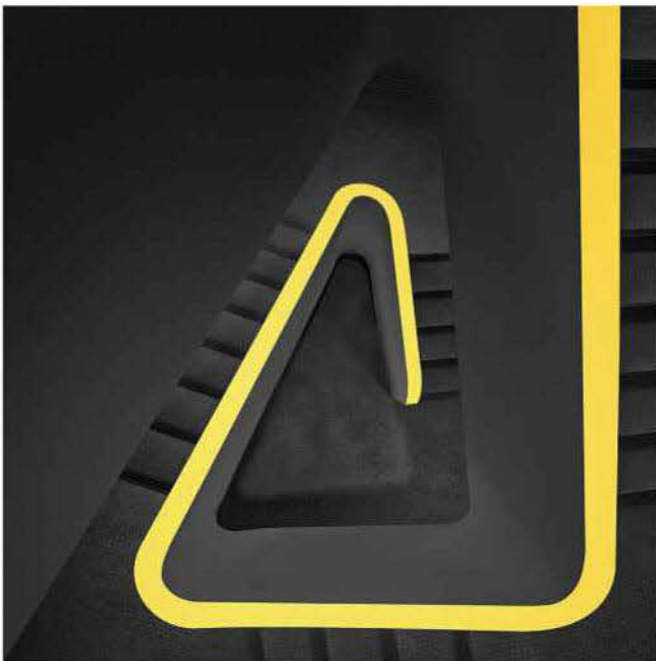
Canon EOS 7D with Canon EF 28-135mm f/3.5-5.6 IS USM lens. Exposure: 1/100sec at f/5 (ISO 250).

## **Guiding Love** by Samantha Goss

(Above right) "This ended up being a lot more romantic than intended. What was originally supposed to be an image about deceitful love, turned into a story about trust. It was freezing and raining as the sun was setting. My wireless remote malfunctioned and this was the only shot we got. Though it was miserable, we laughed a lot and it made us feel alive. This image reminds me of an unforgettable experience."

Canon EOS 6D with Canon EF 28-135mm f/3.5-5.6 IS USM lens. Exposure: 1/160sec at f/5.6 (ISO 250).





## ***Spiral*** by Markus Studtmann

[www.paintingwithlight.de](http://www.paintingwithlight.de)

(Top) "This is the central staircase of a German library, which usually stands out for its strong pink and green hues. I originally intended a central view straight from above, but as I experimented with angles I found this perspective, holding the camera over the bannister and shooting blind. I converted it to black & white to highlight the spiral."

Ricoh GR with 18.3mm f/2.8 fixed lens. Exposure: 1/40sec at f/4 (ISO 560).

## ***Follow the line*** by Markus Studtmann

(Above) "This image started out as a shot of a staircase that was painted mostly white and had very low contrast. The staircase descends many floors, but I decided to keep my composition simple and focus on the lowest two floors only. The most interesting shape for me was the top of the handrail, which I coloured yellow in post-processing before darkening the rest of the scene to give it a contrasting background."

Ricoh GR with 18.3mm f/2.8 fixed lens. Exposure: 1/40sec at f/4 (ISO 400).

## ***Circles*** by Markus Studtmann

(Top) "I shot this in the atrium of an office building in Hamburg. Fascinated by the circular arrangement, I initially tried to capture the structure from the middle, but wasn't able to reach out that far. I then tried the cascade-like arrangement you see here. The real challenge was dodging and burning the floor on each level to get a more uniform look. The dynamic range of the Ricoh GR helped here."

Ricoh GR with 18.3mm f/2.8 fixed lens. Exposure: 1/40sec at f/2.8 (ISO 400).

## ***Into the blue*** by Markus Studtmann

(Above) "This image is part of a series of quadrangle courtyards. This is an interesting building that I found in Berlin. I revisited twice, because I sought a clear blue sky and no shadows. To get this angle of view, I put my camera with an ultra wide-angle lens on the ground and used a remote control in order to stay out of the image. In post-processing I mirrored some parts of the front to get a more symmetrical look."

Canon EOS 5D Mk II with Canon EF 17mm f/4L TS-E lens. Exposure: 1/60sec at f/11 (ISO 100).



# Portfolio

## Flight Of The King by Rob Cross

[www.robimages.co.uk](http://www.robimages.co.uk)

(Right) "Kingfishers are my favourite bird, and whilst I have thousands of perched shots I really wanted an action image. This bird was a creature of habit, and watching him often gave me an understanding of how he behaved, which helped me capture this image."

Canon EOS-1D Mk IV with Canon EF 300mm f/2.8L IS lens. Exposure: 1/6400sec at f/5 (ISO 640).

## Landing Gear Down by Rob Cross

(Below left) "I wanted to capture an image with an owl just about to land, but struggled to get the image I envisioned. I had to push up the ISO and shoot wide open to achieve a fast enough shutter speed given the lack of light. It wasn't ideal, but I was happy to finally get the shot!"

Canon EOS-1D Mk IV with Canon EF 300mm f/2.8L IS lens. Exposure: 1/3000sec at f/2.8 (ISO 3200).

## Going Underground by Rob Cross

(Below right) "Skomer is great for seabirds and the puffins in particular are very photogenic! I could not pass up this chance of a puffin in its nest burrow. The bird would occasionally pop its head out and I had to get down really low to the ground to capture this image."

Canon 1D Mk IV with Canon EF 300mm f/2.8L IS lens. Exposure: 1/200sec at f/8 (ISO 500).

## Sunrise Stag by Rob Cross

(Bottom centre right) "I travelled to Richmond Park in London to see the red deer rut. I wanted a silhouette amongst the trees, unfortunately the light was perfect but no stags were nearby. All of a sudden a lone stag strolled in, bellowing. Everything came together just right."

Canon EOS-1D Mk IV with Canon EF 300mm f/2.8L IS lens. Exposure: 1/1600sec at f/8 (ISO 800).

## Lying Low by Rob Cross

(Bottom far right) "I spent quite a long time watching this mountain hare who was very accommodating and comfortable in my presence. Using sensible field craft and respecting this wild animal, allowing it to act naturally, gave me a lot of satisfaction when shooting this image."

Canon EOS-1D Mk IV with EF 300mm f/2.8L lens and 2x teleconverter. Exposure: 1/320sec at f/8 (ISO 400).

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# Snapshots

YOUR MONTHLY PHOTO DIGEST



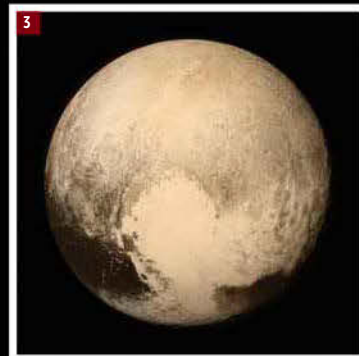
## We've come a long way

Almost a decade ago, NASA's New Horizons spacecraft embarked on a journey to the edges of our solar system with the aim of providing us with more information on the dwarf planet, Pluto. In July, 2015, incredible images were beamed back showing Pluto's surface in greater detail than any of us could have imagined. Thanks to advancements in science and technology, here's how our view of Pluto has changed over the years...

**1) February 21, 1994:** Pluto and its moon, Charon, are photographed by the Hubble Space Telescope from a distance of 2.6 billion miles. That's the equivalent of photographing a baseball 40 miles away.

**2) March 7, 1996:** Hubble takes several exposures of Pluto as it rotates through a 6.4 day period to build a surface map. The images, although lacking detail, show contrast in Pluto's surface, indicating topographic features.

**3) July 13, 2015:** The Long Range Reconnaissance Imager (LORRI) aboard New Horizons records a frame-filling image as the spacecraft passes 476,000 miles from Pluto.



© NASA





# WORLD AT NIGHT

## Winners revealed

A SELECTION OF NOCTURNAL VIEWS THAT WILL BOTH AMAZE AND ASTOUND YOU

**"A**N INTERNATIONAL EFFORT to present stunning nightscape photos and time-lapse videos of the world's landmarks against celestial attractions", is how The World At Night (TWAN) programme is described by its founders. But once you witness the incredible images from its 2015 contest you'll read it as an understatement. The winners of the 6th International Earth and Sky Photo Contest, founded by TWAN and Dark Skies Awareness, showcases images combining landscapes with astronomical perspectives and celestial phenomena. The contest is open to anyone of any age; whether professional, hobbyist or enthusiast. This year saw more than 1,000 entries from 54 countries. The selected images were those that were most effective in showing the public how important and delicate the starry sky is as a part of our nature, and the issue of light pollution.

Competition judge David Malin, a pioneer in scientific astrophotography, shared his thoughts on the contest: "This competition encourages photographers with imagination to push their cameras to their technical limits, and to produce eye-catching images that appear perfectly natural and are aesthetically pleasing. Hundreds of nightscape photographers from across the world rose to the challenge, and the panel of nine judges was ultimately faced with finding the best from over 800 images."

There are two categories – Beauty of the Night Sky and Against the Lights – with one overall winner, who this year was UK-based Eric Nathan for his image 'Star Trails Above Table Mountain'. He won an Advanced Polaris star-tracking mount. Category winners netted \$500 gift certificates and astronomical filters. Due to the number of excellent images not reaching the shortlist because of exposure blending and compositing, the 2016 contest will have a new category dedicated to HDR, exposure blends and focus stacking. For more information, visit: [www.twanight.org](http://www.twanight.org)

ERIC NATHAN

## A NEW BLUE MARBLE

NASA RELEASE INCREDIBLE 'WHOLE EARTH' IMAGE TAKEN FROM ONE MILLION MILES AWAY

IN 1972, ASTRONAUTS aboard Apollo 17 beamed back an image that became one of the most iconic of our time: 'Blue Marble'. On 6 July, 2015, NASA released the first image taken by the Deep Space Climate Observatory (DSCOVR), showing a similar view from a staggering one million miles away.

Although there have been other 'Blue Marble' images, these have mostly been composites stitched from several frames, rather than single images. Taken using the

satellite's Earth Polychromatic Imaging Camera, this latest image offers a clear view of our planet, thanks to the satellite's position – between the Sun and the Earth – and its distance from Earth. DSCOVR's mission is to offer advanced warning of solar winds, and will deliver approximately 10,000 images over the next 18 months. Such is the distance between Earth and DSCOVR, that the light captured is five seconds in the past at the point of capture, due to the time taken for light to travel. Now that's mind-boggling!

NASA plans to provide an online gallery soon, with the images uploaded once per day. For more information on DSCOVR, visit: [www.nesdis.noaa.gov/DSCOVR](http://www.nesdis.noaa.gov/DSCOVR)



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# REPUTATION IS EVERYTHING

JORDAN BUTTERS OFFERS HIS OPINION ON TESTINO'S MOST RECENT ROYAL PORTRAITS AND WHY EVERY OTHER PHOTOGRAPHER CAN FEEL PRETTY GOOD ABOUT THEM

**T**HIS PAST MONTH, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge enjoyed the traditional ritual of baptising their youngest child, Princess Charlotte. Choosing a photographer for such an important occasion must be difficult when you know that the results will be scrutinised by the entire world and kept on file in the pages of history. Therefore when news that legendary fashion and portrait photographer Mario Testino was to be drafted in again to perform his royal duties, I think fans of the monarchy breathed a collective sigh of relief. For one of the most celebrated photographers of our time, this would be a doddle, right?

"For myself, and many others, those sighs of relief quickly turned into gasps of surprise when the images were released. While the formal group shots were of the calibre you'd expect, the candid images, and one shot in particular stood out as, well... a bit amateurish. Testino's portrait of the Duchess and Princess together looks as if to be lit by harsh on-camera flash – both the Duchess and Princess's skin are blown out with hotspots, there's a visible hard shadow line on the wall behind and Princess Charlotte (the only person making eye contact with the camera, and probably blinded by the flash) is considerably out of focus. In fact, the point of focus seems to be the Duchess's necklace. I understand that a good photograph isn't all about technical perfection, but this one is so far off the mark I'm surprised that it's not crumpled up on the cutting-room floor. Shot by anyone with less of a reputation, this image would be branded as nothing more than a misfocused snapshot, and would most likely arrive accompanied by a sticker from Boots letting Testino know that he got the exposure and focusing wrong.

"At this point I'm not quite sure how to feel about the whole affair – on one hand I'm miffed that Testino has built up a big enough reputation and vocal army of sycophants that the quality of his work is no longer scrutinised on a technical level, yet on the other I'm slightly relieved that even the 'best' in the business have an off-day at work now and again."



MARIO TESTINO/ART PARTNER

## Photo Fact: Did you know?

The longest photographic negative in existence measures around 40 metres and was captured by Esteban Pastorino Diaz in 2010. The image was recorded using a panoramic slit camera mounted to the roof of a moving car in Buenos Aires, Argentina. SOURCE: GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS



## PHOTO LAW

### Freedom of panorama upheld

UK PHOTOGRAPHERS CAN rest assured by the recent decision of the European Parliament to uphold the Freedom of Panorama in the EU, for the time being. The provision, which allows buildings, sculptures and others works of art positioned in a public place to be included in images, videos and paintings without infringing copyright, was proposed to be amended in a move that would see professional photographers being forced to apply for permission from the building's architect before shooting – similar to the strict commercial photography rules in place in France. There were further fears that amateur snaps could also fall foul of the changes too.

A petition against the move on change.org amassed over 550,000 signatures and, thankfully, only 40 of the 751 members of the European parliament voted for the amendment. For the time being, you're free to continue photographing in public!



## Photo Fun

### TRUE OR FALSE?

Two photo truths, one fib – can you spot which one is a lie? Turn the page upside down to see the answer!

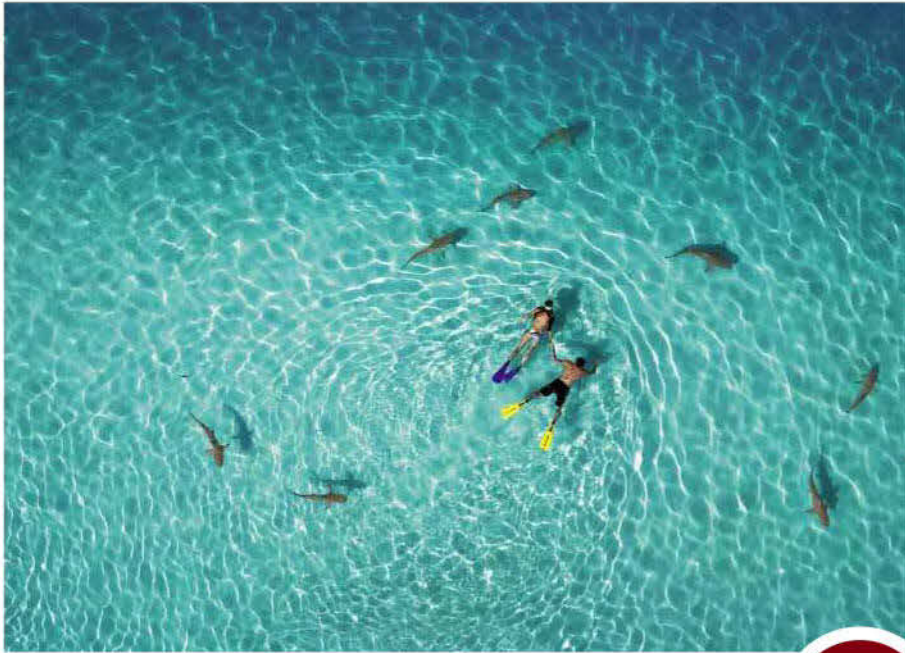
**A)** Kodak developed the first digital camera in 1975, but canned the project for fear of the technology damaging their film photography business.

**B)** The company name 'Kodak' originally came from founder George Eastman's family dog – a pug puppy called Coda.

**C)** Kodak emerged from bankruptcy in 2013 after selling many of its patents to tech giants Apple, Google, Facebook and Amazon, to name but a few.

Answer: B – 'Kodak' has no meaning, it was simply a short word that was easy to spell and couldn't be mispronounced! (Source: Wikipedia)





TAHITIFLYSHOOT



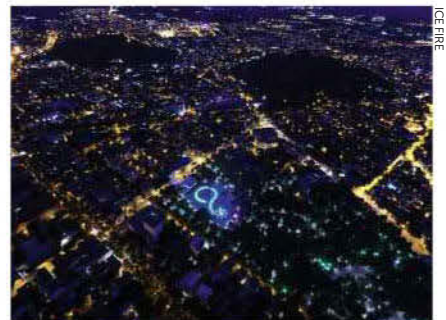
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ICE FIRE

## HIGH-FLYING PRIZE PHOTOS

COMP  
WINNERS

WINNERS ANNOUNCED FOR ANNUAL AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

**H**AVE YOU EVER fancied being able to soar high above the clouds for a true bird's-eye view of the world? The winning images from the second annual Dronestagram photography contest have been unveiled and, as with last year, the incredibly unique perspective offered by these feats of technology can't be disputed.

An expert panel of judges, including *National Geographic* Deputy Director of Photography and Pulitzer prize winner Ken Geiger, were on hand to pour over the technical merits of each and every image. With prizes on offer ranging from publication in *National Geographic* magazine to drones, GoPro, Kodak cameras and Adobe subscriptions, competition was fierce over the three categories – Nature, Places and Dronies (that being, a selfie taken with a drone!).

Top prize in the Places category went to Ricardo Matiello for his image 'Above the Mist', showing his hometown of Maringá in Brazil, while the Nature category went to Dronestagram user tahitiflyshoot for his spectacular image of snorkelers swimming amongst sharks off the coast of Moorea, near Tahiti. Over 5,000 entries in total flew in from all around the world, highlighting the popularity of aerial photography since the recent advent of drone technology.

If you're a fellow drone enthusiast and fancy showing your aerial mastery off to the world, then the third annual Dronestagram photo contest will be announced shortly. For more information and to view the rest of the winning images, visit: [www.dronestagr.am](http://www.dronestagr.am)



Flickr

**Pettico Wick**

by Calum Gladstone

[www.flickr.com/calumgladstone](http://www.flickr.com/calumgladstone)

Taken in the picturesque Scottish border village of St Abb's, near Berwick Upon Tweed, Calum had to withstand some pretty miserable conditions to capture this fantastic image: "There were strong winds and rough seas this day. To get the ethereal effect that I wanted, I used a Lee Filters Little Stopper ND to obtain a long exposure, and a sunset filter to enhance the rich golden colours on the horizon."

Canon EOS 6D with Canon EF 17-40mm f/4L lens.  
Exposure: 571 seconds at f/13 (ISO 50).



## IN THE PICTURE

### *A flash of inspiration*

It's hard to ignore a jaw-dropping still of a natural phenomena like a super-cell lightning storm, but a time-lapse of a super-cell storm over the Grand Canyon, in Arizona, now that's a sight we had to share. Captured by photographer Evan Halleck, he tells us what happened:

"Across the canyon a crazy storm started to form so I got into my car and drove 25 minutes towards it. I set up a time-lapse, taking a photo every two seconds to make sure I would get a lightning shot. I took around 1,200 photos!" If you want to see this incredible super-cell storm in motion, watch Evan's time-lapse film, here: [http://bit.do/DSLR\\_supercell](http://bit.do/DSLR_supercell)



## VIDEO OF THE MONTH

### **Illuminating the Face on Location**

by Peter Hurley

Portrait photographer Peter Hurley is considered by many to be the master of the headshot. Over the years he has crafted a style of studio portraiture that's instantly recognisable – and now you can learn how he does it. Hurley, in conjunction with Fstoppers and Profoto, has produced a 40-minute video explaining how he handles lighting on location. It doesn't take a genius to spot that Hurley is heavily endorsed by Profoto and so he does wax lyrical about the Profoto B1 system – a lot – but regardless, he covers several on-location lighting set-ups that can be applied no matter what flash or camera system you use.

There's something for everyone in this video – there's a wealth of knowledge for those new to mixing flash with daylight, but for those already versed in location lighting, it's the photographer-to-subject relationship that will peak your interest. The reason Hurley is thought to be one of the best headshot photographers in the world is not only because he knows how to light his portraits so well, it's the magical rapport he builds that really lets him get the best out of any subject. To view the video for yourself, visit: [http://bit.do/DSLR\\_Hurley](http://bit.do/DSLR_Hurley)





## Key change for photographers

It's been said that it takes one person to change the world – and in the case of photographers versus the music industry that seems to be true. Last month we reported on the 'unfair' agreements issued to photographers by many music artists and their row about image rights. Although concert photographers handing over copyright to artists has been a bone of contention for a while, when singer Taylor Swift criticised Apple Music's payment policy last month it provided an irresistible opportunity to highlight her own restrictive contracts for photographers. In an open letter to Swift, British photographer Jason Sheldon exposed her double-standards and overreaching terms. Since then, more photographers are shouting out about the crippling effects of such strict image rights, causing Swift to release a revised agreement addressing the concerns for her '1989 World Tour'. The new agreement, overseen by members of media groups such as The Associated Press, still prohibits images being used commercially without prior consent, but has relaxed its guidelines for photographers to use the images in their portfolio and editorially. While Swift has received a lot of fire for her agreements, she was not alone in providing 'unfair' terms to photographers. Let's hope the rest of the industry take heed and follow by her example.

### Quick Q&A

**Q) I always see two maximum ISO ratings given on cameras – native and expanded. What's the difference?**

**A)** In short, the expanded ISO rating is a marketing exercise. A camera's native ISO is the limit that the hardware can push the sensor's sensitivity to. When you set your camera to use its expanded ISO, that extra sensitivity is applied via in-camera software, much like increasing the sliders in Camera Raw or Lightroom. Such high ISO ratings are rarely used, and are really more of a number to help sell cameras rather than a usable feature.



### QuickEdit

#### Lightroom quick tip

Unless you're lucky enough to have a new camera, chances are that you find yourself routinely removing spots and splotches from your images caused by sensor dirt. In Lightroom, there's a neat feature that makes finding pesky spots even easier. After selecting the **Spot Removal tool**, click on **Visualize Spots** below the image. Move the slider to the right until you see spots appear and then use the Spot Removal tool as normal. You'll be able to quickly remove a lot more splotches and spots than if you'd have done it by eye – easy!





## Top Tweets

Paranjay Dutt @Herr\_Joy  
Reading @evoDeanSmith's feature in  
@DigitalSLRPhoto on how to shoot cars.  
#mustread

Stephen Curry @scurrymann  
Thank you @DigitalSLRPhoto for using my poppy  
#photo on front of your July issue *Shoot Summer*  
article. Appreciated.

Towaha @SOFTowaha  
Somebody just gifted me @DigitalSLRPhoto  
magazines! Best #Ramadan gift ever!

Hayden @HMPHOTO LONDON  
@DigitalSLRPhoto Time to catch up on very  
important reading! #photographer

Damien Davis @damiendavis  
Pleased to be featured in this month's  
@DigitalSLRPhoto magazine. I must get out and  
take some new shots though!

Shipwrecked Mariners @ShipwreckedSoc  
@DigitalSLRPhoto we're running a photo  
competition to find the #UltimateSeaView. Do you  
know any keen photographers?

“A CAMERA IS A TOOL FOR  
LEARNING HOW TO SEE  
WITHOUT A CAMERA”

— Dorothea Lange —

## BLOG OF THE MONTH *Clay Cook | Community*

Regular readers will remember that we interviewed Kentucky-based studio photographer Clay Cook a few months ago. Since then, alongside shooting, Clay has been busy sharing his knowledge online and travelling the US teaching lighting techniques and business skills in exclusive workshops. While not strictly a blog, if you've any kind of interest in off-camera lighting and portraiture we recommend pointing your browser toward the *Clay Cook | Community* on Facebook. At over 1,200 members strong at last count, alongside inspirational work from Clay and other top photographers you'll also find a huge amount of information on lighting set-ups, behind-the-scenes images and an open forum for asking questions and getting feedback on your own work. It's currently a closed group so you'll have to sign in to join the community. To find out more and to join, visit: [www.facebook.com/groups/claycookcommunity/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/claycookcommunity/)



THE ONE THAT SHOOTS 30 PHOTOS A SECOND

CHANGING PHOTOGRAPHY

### PICK PERFECT SHOTS FROM 4K VIDEO

LUMIX G7 lets you shoot amazing 4K action at 30 frames per second, then scroll through and extract any moment as a stunning photograph within the camera. And other features like AutoFocus with Depth from Defocus technology and excellent low-light performance guarantee great results, however and whatever you're shooting. More compact and versatile than a standard DSLR, the G7 is just one of the 4K LUMIX range, the perfect line-up for aspiring photographers and filmmakers alike.



## Photo Basics

### FOCUSING WITH LIVEVIEW

Modern autofocus systems are very advanced, capable of locking on to moving targets at a great distance with frightening accuracy. However there is one thing that's even more accurate when it comes to critical focusing – the human eye. That's why, when it comes to shooting static subjects close-up, we would always recommend that you fine-tune your focus using LiveView. Here's how you do it:

- 1** Make sure your camera is locked in place on a tripod. When shooting subjects in macro, the slightest movement can throw it out of focus.
- 2** Look through the viewfinder and use autofocus to lock on to your chosen subject. Switch the lens to manual focus and enable LiveView mode.
- 3** Use the + button to magnify your subject and carefully fine-tune your focus using the focus ring – only a small adjustment should be needed, if any.
- 4** In aperture-priority, set your chosen aperture. LiveView allows you to preview the depth-of-field at this f/stop. You're ready to fire the shutter.



**Panasonic**

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June 15



June 15

**LUMIX**





# FUJIFILM

## “THE NEW X-T10 IS GREAT FUN TO USE AND MAKES IT EASY TO SHOOT HIGH QUALITY IMAGES”

Peter Hawk, advertising photographer  
PETER-HAWK.COM



CAMERA: X-T10 LENS: XF23MM EXPOSURE: 1/180 SEC AT F4, ISO 400

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## UNDEREXPOSED

JORDAN BUTTERS SPEAKS TO COMMERCIAL PHOTOGRAPHER AARON DRAPER ABOUT HIS SERIES, *UNDEREXPOSED*, AND SHOWING CALIFORNIA'S HOMELESS IN A NEW LIGHT

WHEN COMMERCIAL PHOTOGRAPHER Aaron Draper decided to take on a project photographing the homeless people of California, he wanted to do so in a completely different way. Rather than approach the project in the all-too-common cliché manner of photographing subjects from afar in natural light, processed in over-sharpened black & white to emphasise weathered faces, Aaron's goal was to do something that would help change people's opinions of those in need.

In his series, *Underexposed*, Aaron uses commercial techniques in lighting, composition and colour, usually reserved for athletes, celebrities and the like, to make his subjects stand out. "I wanted to create photographs of the homeless that made people feel something. Far too often, street photographers who are searching for urban wildlife stalk the homeless," explains Aaron. "Unfortunately, this does nothing to increase our understanding of their lives or situations. We are on this side of the camera and they are far, far away on the other side. My work celebrates them as human beings by lighting them and photographing them to the absolute best of my ability."

Aaron's use of considered lighting also allowed him to get to know his subjects and hear their stories while he set up his equipment. Rather than approach, shoot and leave, having a photographer take the time to create technical lighting set-ups and compositions must have felt pretty special to someone who is used to being walked past and ignored. He would also pay his subjects for their time, too. "I ask their permission to photograph them, much as I would anyone else, and I get a signed model release," explains Aaron. "I even pay my subjects a dollar a minute. I get their photo printed and return to try and find them and present them their portrait. I have also began to get local homeless agencies involved. They don't have the funds to hire commercial photographers to work on their campaigns, so I donate images."

Aaron's *Underexposed* has recently gained viral success online, which has earned him a lot of attention as well as praise from fellow photographers, and some to-be-expected criticism too: "Some people say I'm exploiting the homeless or trying to whitewash their problems. Once they hear



**Top & above)** Aaron takes the time to know his subjects before approaching their photograph in the same manner that he would a professional commercial shoot. This gives *Underexposed* the visual polish that it needs to compete with the sheer amount of content that we consume every day.

more about my project they see that this is untrue. But controversy is good because it keeps people talking about an issue that is close to my heart. Apathy is an artist's worst nightmare, and in an age when artists must compete with the vast amounts of content uploaded every minute, it's difficult to bring attention to some of the problems in society that aren't so pretty. If you're wanting to get people to notice social issues, they must be as visually compelling as advertising. That's why I think my project is actually getting the exposure that it is – I approached homelessness in a way that would grab people's attention and keep them looking." To learn more about Aaron's project, and to view more of the images, visit: [www.aarondraper.com](http://www.aarondraper.com)





Focal length: 15mm Exposure: F/8.0 1/40 sec ISO400

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from an ultra-wide-angle zoom

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## F/2.8 Di VC USD

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For Canon, Nikon, Sony\*\*

\* For F/2.8 ultra-wide-angle zoom lens for full-frame DSLR cameras  
(As of November 2014. Source: Tamron)

\*\* The Sony mount version does not include VC (SP 15-30mm F/2.8 Di USD)

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*The* Location Guide

# North Cornwall

The Atlantic North Cornish coast is one of the most popular stretches of coastline in Europe. Best loved for its sand and surf, this dramatic coastline is wildly beautiful and a haven for landscape photographers

LOCATION: CORNWALL, ENGLAND OS REF: OS EXPLORER OL104, 106 & 111





## North Cornwall

Cornwall, located in the far west of the UK, is home to almost 300 miles of magnificent coastline. The county is on a peninsula tumbling into the rough and vast Atlantic Ocean. Stretching over 40 miles, from Bude to St Agnes, the north Cornish coast is a sweep of enormous golden sandy bays and dramatic coastal cliffs. In summer, the area is buzzing with holidaymakers who flock to Cornwall to enjoy the sun, sand and pounding surf. However, it is also a dramatic and wild place. During winter giant Atlantic rollers pummel the coast, while stormy conditions enhance the ruggedness and drama of this quite extraordinary coastline. The mixture of pretty sandy bays, picturesque fishing harbours, imposing coastline and rough seas make this one of the most outstanding places in the UK for capturing seascapes.

You will quickly fall in love with Cornwall. Not only does it have spectacular photogenic beaches, but it is also home to Cornish pasties, delicious cream teas and real ale! What is there not to like? Many of us have fond, childhood memories of holidaying in Cornwall. However, as a landscape photographer, you will see it with very different eyes.

The photo potential of its coastal resorts is often clear to see. Starting north and travelling southwest, Bude is our first location. Situated just a few miles from the Devon border, Bude is a lovely seaside resort. It is best known for its large harbour, breakwater and lock gates. You can get a great viewpoint of Bude and the adjoining coast by following the coastal path south of the harbour towards a little folly on the cliff top called Compass Point. From this elevated view, you can capture lovely far-reaching views along the coastline. Bude is home to two large sandy bays – Summerleaze and Crooklets – and Widemouth Bay is close by. However, from a photography viewpoint, Sandymouth Bay – a few miles north of the town – is a better option. It is home to amazing, colourful geology and interesting rocky ledges, which look great when waves lap around them. At low tide, interesting tidal pools are revealed. The beach is near the village of Kilhampton and there is a large National Trust car park within a short walk of the beach. A low to mid tide is normally best suited for photography.

Journeying southwest, Crackington Haven – with its carboniferous sandstone cliffs – is well worth visiting with your camera. It is a small village, home to a pebbly beach sandwiched between steep coastal cliffs. There is a huge amount of potential foreground interest here – interesting rock-pools and ledges. Like many of the locations on the north coast, Crackington is best shot in the evening, with the sun setting out to sea. With so many nice, interesting rocks on the beach, creative long exposures work well here, particularly when the waves are rushing around or over the rocky shore.



A three-stop solid ND is a good choice; blurring water just enough to create a nice, intentional level of motion, while still retaining detail and interest in the water.


Boscastle is a picturesque fishing village, best shot from an elevated viewpoint where you are able to capture the snaking shape of the village's distinctive natural harbour. If you have the energy, walk up the path – to the right of the harbour – toward the flagpole on the top of the cliffs. From here you will enjoy a far-reaching vista of Boscastle and the surrounding countryside and coastline. Ideally, you want water filling the harbour in order to help define its shape, so a high tide is best. A wide-angle lens is the perfect choice. During the summer months the sun sets in a lovely position, bathing the village in low light, while remaining far enough round to be out of frame.


Before you reach Tintagel, you will find a little hidden gem called Saint Nectan's Glen. This is where the River Trevillet has carved its way through the rock to create a magnificent 60ft waterfall. The car park is on the B3263 coast road at Trethevy. Walk inland through woodland until you reach the café and visitor centre. You have to pay to visit the falls, but during spring – when foliage is vibrant lime green – and autumn, the glen is a very photogenic. Spray can be an issue, though, so keep a lens cloth to hand. Also, wear 'wellies' so you can wade into the water to find the best viewpoint.


Trebarwith Strand, just south of Tintagel, is one of the north Cornwall's most photogenic places – see *Location Guide*, August 2014, issue 93. Close by is one of Cornwall's most distinctive and beautiful stretches of coastline – the unusual twin headland at



## Useful Information


 **Where is it?** The north Cornish coast is an area of Cornwall, in southwest England, stretching from near Bude to the St Agnes area.


 **Getting there by road:** From London, it takes less than five hours by car to reach the heart of Cornwall. Drive along the M4 motorway from London – or M6 from Manchester – and then the M5 to Exeter, before joining the A30. Alternatively, you can enter north Cornwall via the scenic Atlantic Highway A39, through Bude, which you join from Junction 27 on the M5.


 **Places to eat and sleep:** Habasca, Bude, EX23 8RE, 01288 352361/ [www.hebasca.co.uk](http://www.hebasca.co.uk). Bedruthan Steps Hotel, Mawgan Porth, TR8 4BU, 01637 860 860/ [www.bedruthan.com](http://www.bedruthan.com)


 **Local camera shops:** There are few dedicated photography shops in the area, but if you need memory cards or batteries, pop into HBH Woolacotts. There are branches in Bude, Wadebridge and Bodmin. Visit: [www.hbh-woolacotts.co.uk](http://www.hbh-woolacotts.co.uk)

## Start Shooting

 **Things to shoot:** Iconic coastal locations, quaint fishing villages, old harbours, fishing boats, colourful beach huts, surfing, large crashing waves, interesting geology and mile upon mile of rocky and sandy beaches. There is always something to shoot.

 **Recommended kit:** Wide-angle and short/medium telephoto lenses, ND grads and solid ND filters, polariser and tripod, walking boots, 'wellies' and good outdoor clothing.

 **When to go:** The north Cornish coast is photogenic throughout the year. However, locations get crowded in summer, so it is best to visit outside the main holiday period. During winter, the sea can be wild and locations quiet, making it appealing.

 **Tide info:** The tides are big in Cornwall and their height can greatly influence the look of a location. Use a local tide table or App like Ayetides for local tide information. This is important for safety also.

- 1) **COMPASS POINT:** Overlooking Bude breakwater, Compass Point creates a striking silhouette at sunset.
- 2) **BOCASTLE:** The rugged coastline and harbour at Boscastle is hugely photogenic and well worth a visit.
- 3) **CRACKINGTON HAVEN:** A mixture of sand, rock pools and jagged rocks means there is no lack of foreground interest.
- 4) **SANDMOUTH BAY:** One of the interesting and attractive beaches in north Cornwall is in Sandymouth Bay.
- 5) **LOWTIDE:** Sandymouth Bay offers interesting tidal pools, waterfalls and streams, adding to the location's appeal.

Pentire Point. The area is in the care of the National Trust and the scenery from the coast path is outstanding. The view looking back towards the Rumps is particularly appealing. In the evening, the coastline is bathed in beautiful, warm sidelight, while in spring there are bluebells and coastal flowers.

Rock and Padstow are well-known and popular Cornish harbours. Padstow in particular remains busy throughout the year, partly thanks to the reputation of Rick

Stein's seafood restaurant. The harbour, brimming with boats of various size and colour, is a lovely picture postcard shot, but with so many people wandering about, it can be difficult to take good, atmospheric images. Thankfully, you don't need to travel far to find more sandy bays: Trevone, Harlyn, Constantine, Treyarnon and Porthcothan are all within a 20-minute drive and all worth exploring. As is Trevoze Lighthouse, one of the area's best-known landmarks. On a

## Ross Hoddinott: "Why I love the north Cornish coast"



"North Cornwall is my home. My parents moved to the Bude area when I was aged seven and I couldn't envisage living anywhere else. The coast is just a five-minute drive away. I think being a landscape photographer gives you a deeper appreciation for the landscape. Throughout the seasons, this rugged coastline offers endless photo opportunities, from wild, raging seas to tranquil, colourful sunsets. Sandymouth Bay is where

I took my first photos and it remains one of my favourite spots. Whether you shoot this coastline from the cliff-tops or from the beach, there is so much beauty. It is a special stretch of coastline – Cornwall is the place I enjoy photographing more than any other."



## North Cornwall

clear day, you can see along the length of the north Cornish coast from the headland. There is a large privately-owned car park close to the headland – you have to pay to park and the gates are shut overnight. However, they don't close until after 10pm, so there is plenty of time to shoot sunset without getting locked in! In spring, the cliff tops are carpeted with thrift and kidney vetch, which add colour and interest to wide-angle views. From the headland opposite the lighthouse, you can get a nice parallel viewpoint and shoot across the sea – ideal for long exposures of the crashing waves. This is a wild spot and it is often windswept – even when shooting from the cliff-tops, sea spray can be an issue. After sunset, you can capture the natural cool tones of twilight, while the beam of the lighthouse adds interest to low-light images.

Landscape photographers visiting north Cornwall have to shoot Bedruthan Steps. Leave your vehicle at the National Trust car park at Carnewas and explore this iconic stretch of coastline. Tall sea stacks stretch across the beach and the cliff-top viewpoints are extraordinary – regardless if you are looking north of southwest. In winter, the steep steps down to the beach are closed. However, from spring onwards, you can access the beach. At low tide, you can shoot the imposing stacks from beach level. Again, evening light is best. In May, pink thrift decorates the cliff tops, but be warned – the location can grow busy with photographers during this time.

Newquay is bordered by seven miles of golden sand. It is home to some of the most popular beaches in the UK – including Fistral and Watergate Bay. However, this is a paradise for surfers and tourists and footprints in the sand can make photography difficult. Instead, it can be worthwhile exploring the beaches slightly

further from the town. Holywell Bay is a great location, backed by large sand dunes, rising up to 60ft. Carter's Rocks, out to sea, provide an ideal focal point and at low tide, wavy sand patterns and tidal pools are revealed. At high tide, the dunes and marram grass make for interesting foregrounds. Like many Cornish beaches, Holywell is crowded during the summer months. However, at other times of the year, the beach is often quiet and it is possible to photograph virgin sand, without people venturing into shot.

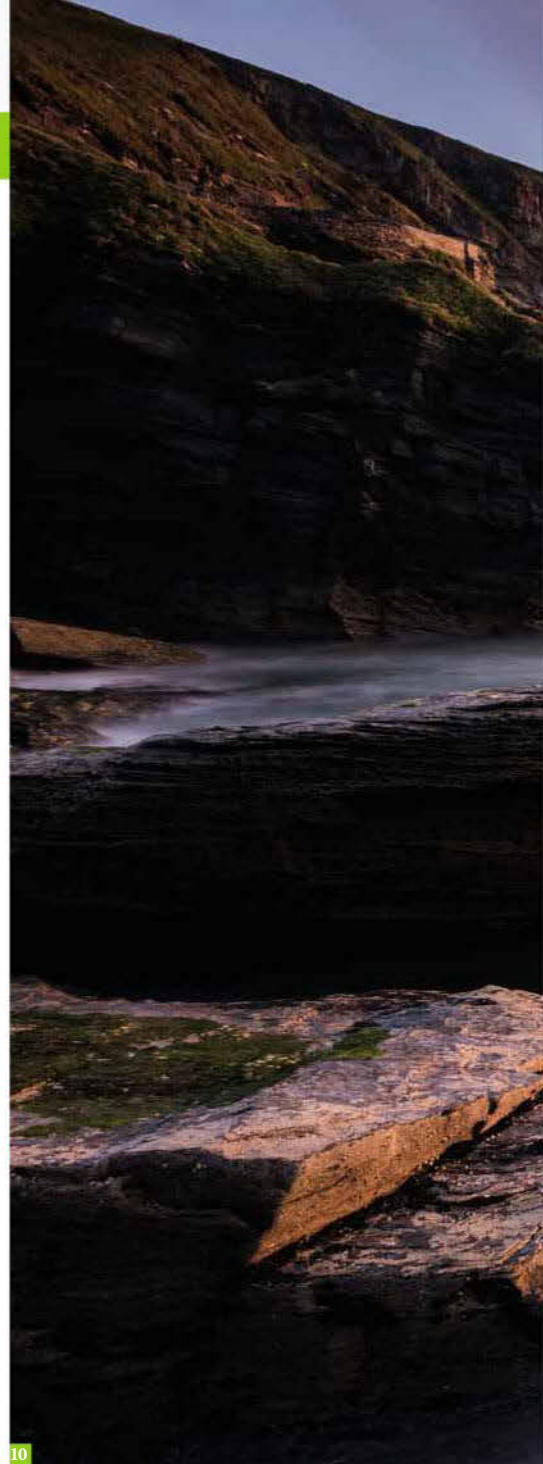
There is some debate as to where north Cornwall officially ends. However, within its boundary is St Agnes. Not far from Chapel Porth beach is Wheal Coates and Towanroath engine house – remnants of Cornwall's industrial past. The ruined tin mines provide a contrast to shooting sandy bays and, in late summer, flowering heather and gorse add extra picture appeal. The engine house looks stunning against the coastal backdrop, particularly if there is a colourful or stormy sky. A wide-angle lens, in the region of 17-35mm on full frame, is best for shots taken nearby. However, also consider following the coastal path and taking shots from further away using longer focal lengths to compress this stunning coastal view.

These are just some of the photo highlights of the north Cornish coastline. If you walk along the south west coast path, or explore the area by car, you will soon find hidden gems and other photogenic, but less well-known viewpoints. Each season offers its own unique beauty, appeal and character.

**6) BEACON:** Trevoze Lighthouse is perched above the rough Atlantic seas. **7) LOWTIDE:** Holywell Bay is a stunning beach – at low tide ripples and texture in the sand are revealed.

**8) PRETTY IN PINK:** The clifftops at Bedruthan Steps are carpeted with wild flowers in spring. **9) THE RUMPS:** Pentire Point, or The Rumps, is one of the most beautiful headlands in the South West. **10) WILD COAST:** Trebarwith Strand is one of the north Cornish coast's most photogenic beaches.

**11) ST NECTANS GLEN:** Located just a short distance from the coast, St Nectans Glen offers a nice contrast from seascapes.







## Keep shooting! Other great locations near the north Cornish coast



8  
MILES  
EAST

### 1) ROUGHTOR

Within a short drive of the north Cornish coast is the wilderness of Bodmin Moor. Roughtor is one of the best locations on the moors. Lots of rocky granite outcrops are scattered around the site, providing photo interest. Allow 20 minutes to walk up to the tor from the car park.



16  
MILES  
EAST

### 2) GOLITHA FALLS

Also on Bodmin is Golitha Falls. A few miles from the village of Minions, the river Fowey cascades through a steep wooded valley. Spring and autumn are particularly good times to visit with your camera. There is a car park close by – just follow the path running alongside the river.



11  
MILES  
NORTH

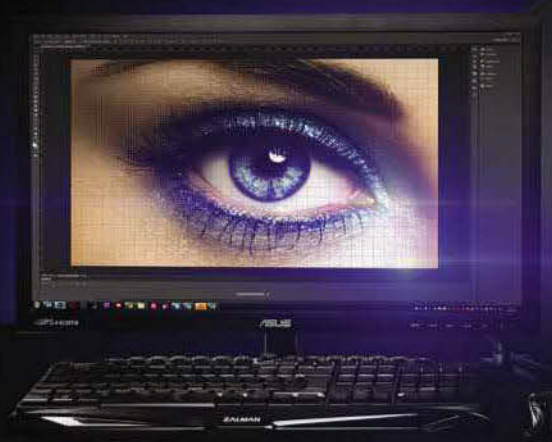
### 3) HARTLAND QUAY

The north Devon coastline is every bit as impressive as its neighbouring county. One of the most spectacular cliffs is at Hartland Quay. The rock layers are incredibly contorted and the beach is rocky and interesting. A high-ish tide is good for seascapes, but be careful.

ALL IMAGES: ROSS HODDINOTT



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# PHOTO SKILLS

IDEAS & ADVICE FOR BETTER PHOTOS

## HOW TO SHOOT PUFFINS *p32*

PRO ADVICE FOR  
CAPTURING GREAT  
IMAGES OF THESE  
AMICABLE BIRDS



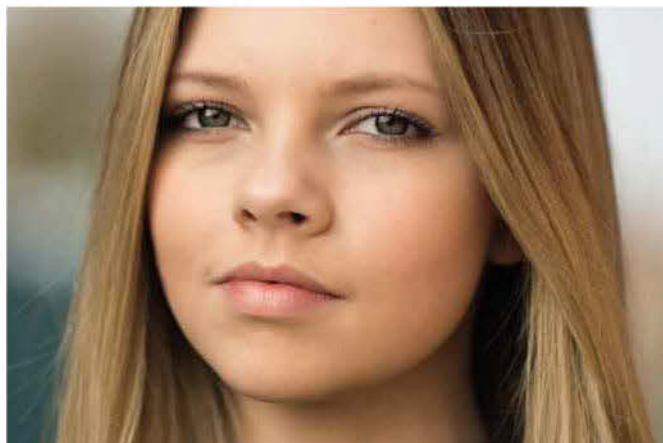
*p36* **MOTION IN THE OCEAN:** CAPTURE COMPELLING COASTAL SCENES



*p45* **SHADY PORTRAITS:** HOW TO USE FLATTERING NATURAL LIGHT



*p40* **MACRO MASTER:** SHOOTING LEAF SKELETONS IN FINE DETAIL



*p48* **EDITING EYES:** HOW TO MAKE EYES DAZZLE IN POST-PROCESSING



# MUCH ADO ABOUT PUFFINS

THE COASTLINES OF THE UK ARE HOME TO MANY SPECIES OF SEABIRD, WITH THE SLIGHTLY COMICAL-LOOKING PUFFINS BEING ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR WITH WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHERS, AS PRO BEN HALL EXPLAINS

**CAMERA:** CANON EOS-1D MK II // **LENS:** CANON EF 100-400MM F/4.5-5.6L USM

**P**UFFINS ARE ONE of Britain's most popular birds, and for good reason. Their big, colourful beak and charismatic behaviour has earned them the nickname 'clowns of the sea'. These photogenic birds come ashore to breed each year, and show very little fear of human presence. There are several breeding sites that can be visited from April-September, most of which afford you close-up views of these captivating and somewhat comical birds. Their tolerance to people means that you do not need a huge lens to capture intimate images either. Their relatively small size and speed makes them a difficult subject to capture in flight, but there are several techniques that can be used to increase your chance of taking perfect puffin pictures.

Modest kit is all you need – a telezoom with a focal length between 100-400mm provides ample reach. The benefit of a longer focal length is the flattened perspective and shallow depth-of-field that it creates. This is especially evident when coupled with a wide aperture. Using at least 300mm and setting an aperture of f/5.6 or wider is an effective way of eliminating distractions in the surroundings. A low angle creates a diffused foreground, too, adding depth and intimacy to your shots. As with any wildlife portrait, the backdrop is imperative – it should be clean and blown well out of focus. There may be opportunities to capture puffins against a dark background by shooting towards an area of shadow, adding atmosphere and drama. When attempting a shot like this,

exposure is key. Make sure you dial in enough negative compensation to hold detail in the highlights. If the background is significantly darker, this will naturally fall into black, and your subject should 'pop' from the frame. The histogram is a valuable guide so check it regularly and adjust your exposure accordingly. Keep an eye on the shutter speed, too. For a portrait image to be successful the eye of your subject needs to be pin-sharp. A tripod that can lie flat provides a solid support, though depending on how much vegetation there is, a beanbag may be more convenient. The pose of the bird can also have a dramatic impact on the final image. Resist firing away, instead, wait patiently until the bird moves its head in such a way that a catchlight appears in the eye.











### ● Observe your subject in flight

Watch for the flight patterns of the puffins as they approach with food for their young. They will usually land in a similar spot each time and take the same route to their burrow. Being able to anticipate their movement is often the key to success. Try panning smoothly by standing with your feet shoulder width apart and swivel the upper half of your body in one smooth motion. When using a long lens, a tripod with a gimbal head is useful as it supports the weight of the kit. You should find it easier to handhold a zoom lens, which will give you a greater freedom of movement while making it easier to make quick adjustments to the composition. Puffins are fast flyers and resemble small missiles in flight, so take as many images as possible to give you the best chance of success.

Research your subject thoroughly: the more knowledge you have, the easier it will be to predict the puffins' behaviour. Don't settle on the first subject you find either, look around for a bird in a suitable position, with not too many distracting elements around it.



### ● Aim for ideal time of day and conditions

Shoot early or late in the day when the light is warm. Depending on the location you choose, this may not be possible as some islands only offer day trips. If you have the option of shooting at sunrise or sunset, however, this will be a great opportunity for some atmospheric backlighting. Try to avoid harsh sunlight. If you only visiting for a day trip an overcast day would be more fruitful, as this reduces contrast and you'll find it much easier to retain detail in the bird's plumage.

### WHERE TO SEE PUFFINS

The best time to see puffins is from late spring through autumn, here are some prime spots in the UK to find them:

- 1) **Lunga:** One of the Treshnish Isles on the West coast of Scotland is home to breeding puffins that will tolerate a very close approach. See [www.staffatours.com](http://www.staffatours.com) for details of how to book a tour.
- 2) **Isle of May:** Off the East coast of Scotland is another great spot for photographing puffins. Boats go from Crail or Anstruther in Fife. Visit [www.isleofmayboattrips.co.uk](http://www.isleofmayboattrips.co.uk).
- 3) **Craigleith & Fidra:** Two islands just off the coast near to the fishing village of North Berwick. These are teeming with puffins during the breeding season.
- 4) **The Farne Islands:** Off the coast of Northumberland and are home to large numbers of puffins and other breeding seabirds. Day trips can be arranged through [www.farne-islands.com](http://www.farne-islands.com)
- 5) **Skomer Island:** Off the Pembrokeshire coast in South Wales is a fantastic spot and great for both flight and portrait images of puffins. Visit [www.pembrokeshire-islands.co.uk](http://www.pembrokeshire-islands.co.uk) for details.



### ● Set up your camera for success

Ensure your focus mode is set to predictive AF (Canon: AI Servo; Nikon: AF-C). Set the shooting mode to continuous so you can fire off a sequence of frames and make sure it is set to its highest burst speed. Adjust your ISO until your shutter speed is at least 1/800sec and use a wide aperture to let as much light as possible into the lens. If your camera has the option of expanding the focusing area, this can make it easier to keep focus on your subject as it moves across the frame.

## PHOTOGRAPHING PUFFINS: POPULAR IDEAS TO TRY...



### 1) CAPTURE CLASSIC BEHAVIOUR

The classic puffin image is one with an adult bird with its mouth stuffed full of sand eels. As the puffins fly back to land to feed their young they move quickly, so try to anticipate their movements. Often, a bird will pause for a few seconds before darting down its burrow to feed its young. Be in position ready to fire!



### 2) ENVIRONMENTAL PORTRAITS

Often the most impressive shots are those that include the environment. Images such as these show the relationship between the bird and the landscape and can hold more interest than a straightforward portrait. Capture sea cliffs in the background and convey the imposing nature of the bird's habitat.



### 3) BIRD AGAINST BLACK

Shoot against an area of shadow for an image full of drama. Look for a cliff cloaked in shadow or an area of sea not lit by the sun and expose for the whites on the bird. Spot metering can often give a more accurate reading. Remember to check your histogram and use exposure compensation when required.





**THAT'S A MOUTHFUL!**

Puffins make for fantastic subjects so be sure to visit a popular breeding ground and capture classic wildlife portraits like this.

Exposure: 1/400sec at f/5.6 (ISO 400).









**PHOTO**  
**SKILLS**

# GIVE IT A SWIRL

LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHER ROSS HODDINOTT SHOWS YOU WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN WANTING TO USE A LONG EXPOSURE TO CREATE YOUR OWN FOREGROUND INTEREST

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CAMERA: NIKON D810 / LENS: NIKKOR AF-S 17-35MM F/2.8

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**U**SING LONG EXPOSURES to creatively blur movement in a landscape is hardly a new technique, but have you ever considered using it to create your own foreground interest? By using Neutral Density (ND) filters, or shooting in low light, photographers can generate long shutter speeds that allow them to blur moving water, cloud or foliage. Results are striking and have more energy, mood and interest than photos taken using a faster exposure. For this reason, photographers often opt for the longest exposure they can – such as you get with a six- or ten-stop ND filter. However, exposures of this length not always create the best or most interesting results, as you'll see here.

Too often photographers rely on using high density NDs to blur subject motion beyond recognition. It may produce creative and surreal results, but it's all too easy to get into a habit of always using lengthy

exposures without considering the effect on motion. In some cases exposures of 30 seconds can destroy detail and texture; while exposures of between 0.5 seconds to ten seconds long can yield more interesting results. By retaining detail in the waves and capturing the motion of water and bubbles swirling around on the water's surface, you can generate your own foreground interest to strengthen your composition.

Success does rely on achieving just the right level of motion, so it can take a few tries to get right – and depends on the speed of the tide, light levels and exposure length for finding the effect you want. To manipulate exposure length, you can select higher ISOs for quicker exposures or attach a solid ND filter for longer ones.

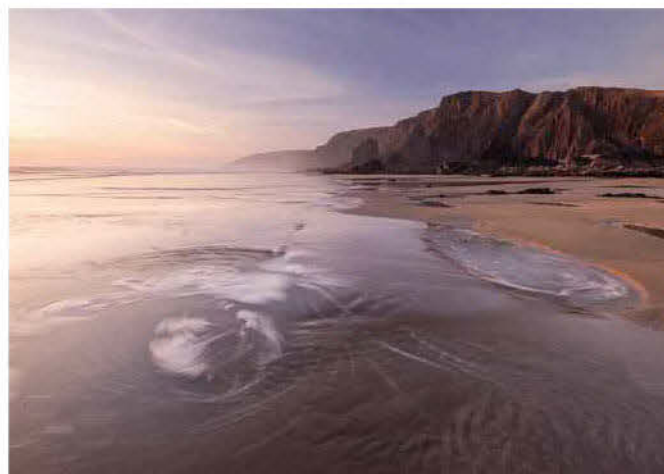
When using motion to create foreground interest, get close to the action, use a low viewpoint and a wide-angle lens to help

emphasise the motion, too. Water trails can act like lead-in lines, drawing the viewer's eye into the frame and creating a stronger sense of depth. Also look for bubbles or foam moving on the surface of tidal or rock pools. While froth might look messy photographed using a fast shutter speed – an exposure of just a few seconds can render bubbles as swirly, interesting patterns. You can achieve a similar effect in wooded valleys, by photographing leaves being swept downstream on fast flowing rivers.

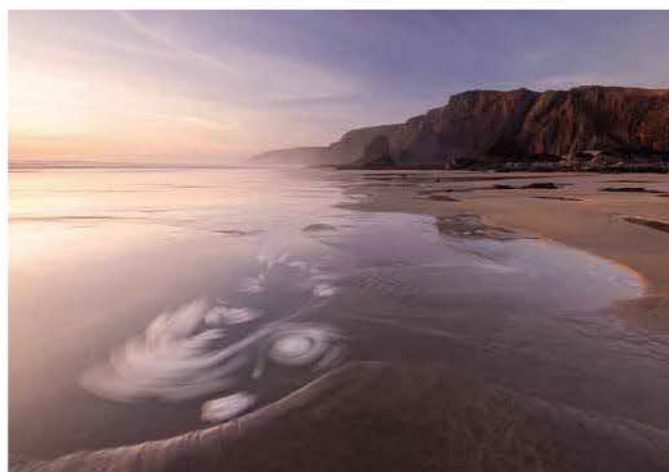
Next time you are out shooting, don't just reach for a six- or ten-stop ND filter when you want to blur motion. Stop and think about what level of movement will create the most interesting effect and how movement in your foreground can be used to add interest or implied motion and depth. Rather than using a two or three-minute exposure, you might just find a second or two is all you need.



**1 CHOOSE A LOCATION** The beach is a great place to use longer exposures for creating foreground interest. A bay at low tide has virgin sand and tidal pools, making it the perfect spot on a summer's evening. In manual mode, I select the camera's lowest ISO rating and an aperture of f/14 for good depth-of-field, which gives me a 0.5 second exposure that results in a lifeless and motionless landscape.



**2 CONSIDER USING AN ND FILTER** To render the scene with the right level of motion, I add a three-stop ND filter to get a four-second exposure and wait for an onrushing wave. The shutter speed is long enough that it blurs the water, but short enough that it still records texture, motion and detail. Any slower and the landscape could be as uninteresting as the 0.5 second exposure.



**3 TIMING IS EVERYTHING** Incoming waves can look messy and chaotic, which is why exposure length and timing is important. It may take a few attempts and time to wait for the right waves, but it's worth the effort. Releasing the shutter as the water recedes should mean it looks more orderly, and may form interesting trails over sand and shingle, as well as defining the shape of any rocks or boulders it washes around.



**4 TIME OF DAY** Once the light levels fall after sunset, you may find you can remove your ND filter and still have a long enough exposure to capture a whirlpool effect. Experiment with different shutter speeds for different effects. Here, a ten- to 15-second exposure renders the moving bubbles in a circular pattern, creating interest and motion that would have been lost had I opted for a much faster or slower speed.



**IT'S ALL ABOUT TIMING**

Combining a receding low tide, beach pools and the perfect shutter speed means you can create your own strong compositions.

**Exposure:** 15 seconds at f/14 (ISO 200).







# BEAUTY IS MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

LEAF THROUGH THIS GUIDE FOR ADVICE ON HOW TO CREATE ARTISTIC SKELETON STILL-LIFES THAT HIGHLIGHT THE TINIEST OF DETAILS, WITH HELP FROM PHOTOGRAPHER CAROLINE SCHMIDT

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CAMERA: NIKON D810 / LENS: SIGMA AF-S 50MM F/2.8 MACRO

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**W**HAT LIES BENEATH the surface is often more interesting than what is first visible: the mechanics of a watch, the circuit board of an electronic device or the skeleton of a leaf, for instance. Revealing these details is part of the intrigue of macro photography; being able to show these hidden beauties photogenically. Leaf skeletons and their intricate structures are mesmerising and delicate, which is why this tutorial focuses on using soft, revealing light.

You might think you need to wait until autumn to find leaf skeletons, but you're actually best creating them when the leaves are at their strongest (see panel); however, you can buy them on eBay year round. If you don't have a macro lens, you can use a standard lens with extension tubes or close-up filters – there's no need for expensive kit here: I've used a second-hand Sigma macro lens bought for £30 online.

## HOWTO: Make your own leaf skeletons

It's time-consuming to make these leaf skeletons, but is quite easy to do. Choose a selection of leaves – poplar and holly work well, as do most fleshy leaves with strong ribs and veins. Place them in a saucepan and cover with washing soda, then two pints of water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 30 minutes. You'll need to keep the leaves in the water for several days, even weeks, so put into a container and store. Once the tissue is softened, you can use a soft paintbrush to remove the material and reveal the skeleton. Once they're dry, you can use metallic spray paint, dip-dye or diluted bleach to whiten. If that seems like a too much effort, hop onto eBay and buy yourself a pack for practically nothing.



**1 SET-UP:** Lightly scrunch up a piece of foil and then smooth it flat and attach to a wall for your background; it gives an uneven, reflective surface that will bounce light off at all angles to create bokeh. For coloured bokeh, use felt tip pens to roughly fill in the foil. Secure a sheet of glass upright with your leaves attached – Play-Doh worked well.



**2 LIGHT THE BACKGROUND:** I use an angle-poise lamp (E5 from IKEA), pointing at the foil. Experiment with lighting angles, but generally as long as the leaves are backlit by the light reflected off the foil, you'll achieve a semi-silhouette effect. The comparative set above shows what happens when the lamp backlights the leaves directly.

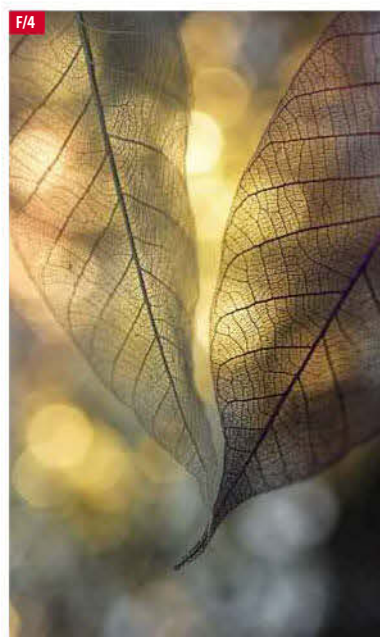


**3 SET UP YOUR CAMERA:** If you find it easier, set your camera on a tripod so you can concentrate on achieving depth-of-field. Using aperture-priority mode, dial in a mid aperture of f/6.3 as a starting point and your lowest ISO rating to maximise quality. Use spot metering to overexpose the background lights and to semi-silhouette the skeleton.

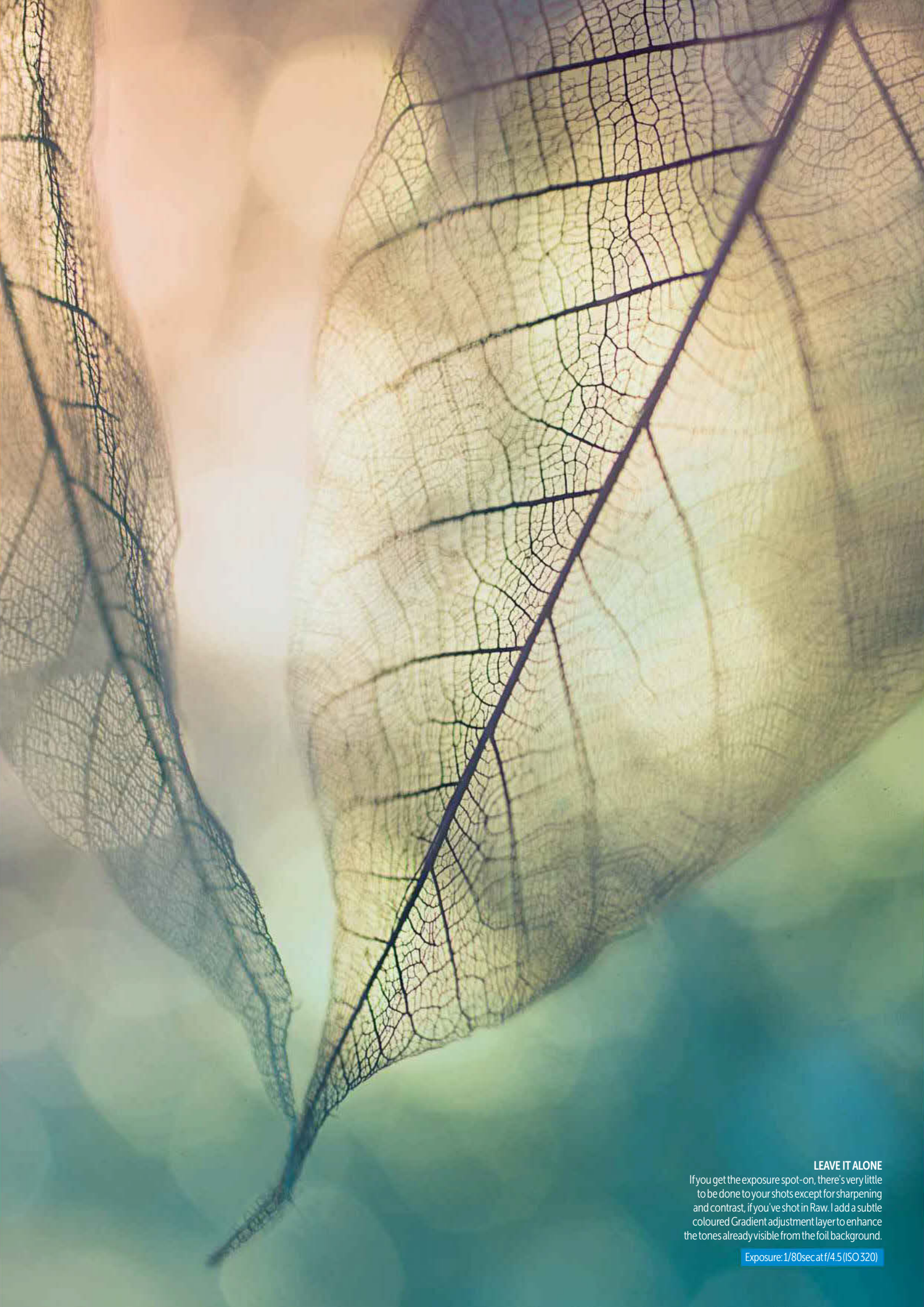


**4 REFINE THE BOKEH** The further you place the leaves from the background, the larger the bokeh and the less likely the foil will be visible. To enhance the silhouette, vary the angle of the glass to the background, I found 45° to work well but this will reduce depth-of-field.

**5 CONTROL DEPTH-OF-FIELD** The beauty of these subjects is their structure, so to highlight the delicate look of the leaves I opt to soften the image with a wide aperture of f/4.5. If autofocus struggles to lock on to the leaves due to the bright background, try switching to manual focus.







#### LEAVE IT ALONE

If you get the exposure spot-on, there's very little to be done to your shots except for sharpening and contrast, if you've shot in Raw. I add a subtle coloured Gradient adjustment layer to enhance the tones already visible from the foil background.

Exposure: 1/80sec at f/4.5 (ISO 320)

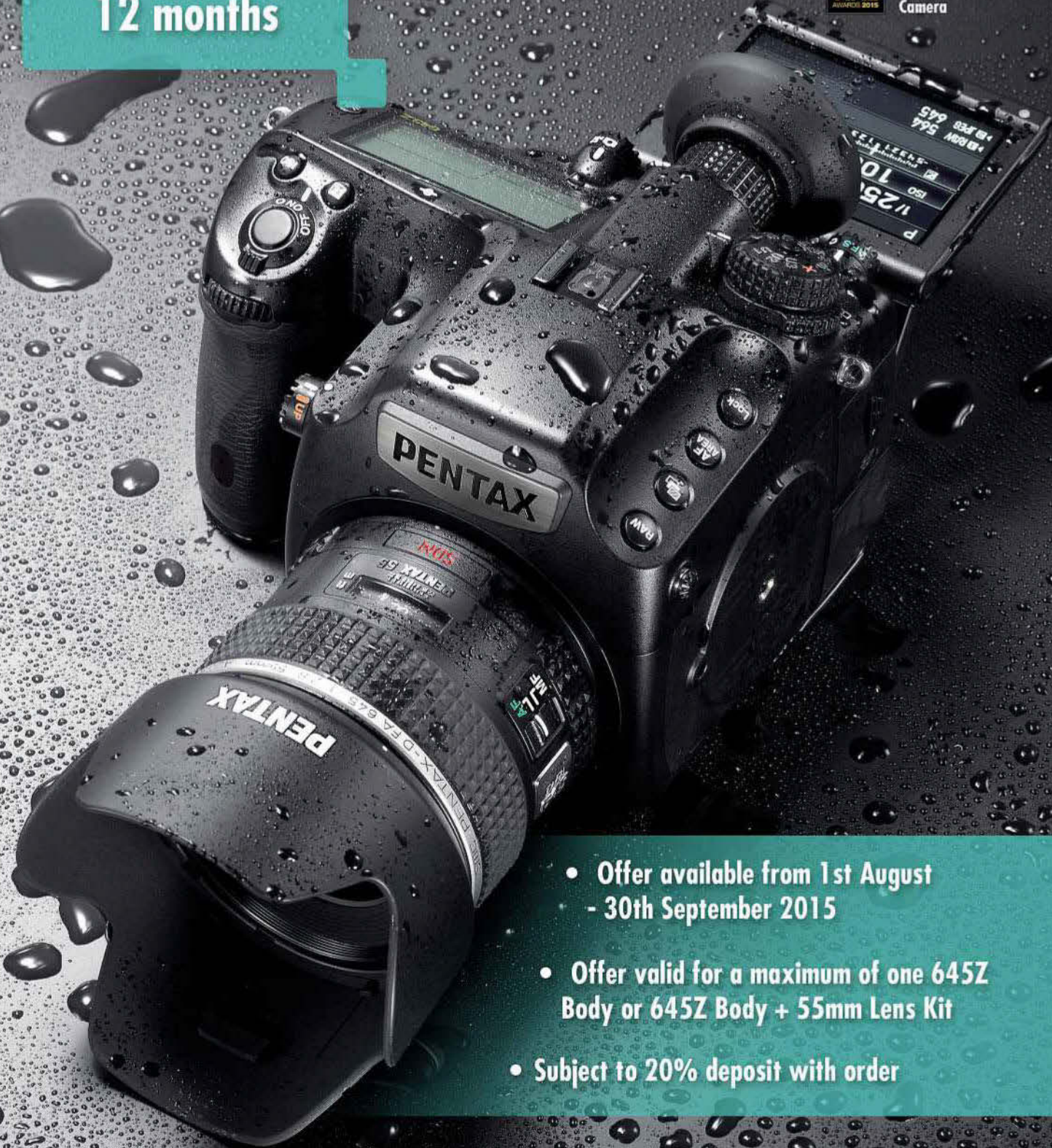


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# SHOOTING IN OPEN SHADE

CREATE BEAUTIFULLY LIT, FLATTERING PORTRAITS WITH NATURAL LIGHT – ALL YOU NEED IS YOUR CAMERA, ONE LENS AND A LITTLE KNOW-HOW. JORDAN BUTTERS SHOWS YOU HOW TO FIND AND USE OPEN SHADE FOR BETTER PORTRAITS

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CAMERA: NIKON D800 / LENS: NIKKOR AF-S 85MM F/1.4G

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**B**EING A PORTRAIT photographer in the UK, you often have to take what you can get when it comes to the weather and the quality of light. Unless you're lucky enough to own or have use of a studio space then, like the rest of us, the majority of your portrait shoots will take place outdoors. Therefore, for the most part, you're at the mercy of Mother Nature when it comes to the lighting conditions, especially if you're relying solely on natural light.

A common misconception is that a bright sunny day is perfect for portraits, but if you're a regular reader then you'll know by now that this couldn't be more wrong – direct midday

sun is high in contrast and creates harsh shadows and bright highlights, particularly on fair-skinned subjects with light hair. There is a simple solution however that lets you shoot flattering, softly-lit portraits using only natural light, even in the middle of a summer's day – and that's by using open shade.

Open shade is that thin sliver of flattering light that you find where direct sun stops and shade begins. The light is still bright and directional, yet diffused and soft, creating subtle shadows and even lighting on your subject's face. When shooting on an overcast day, technically anywhere is open shade, as the sun is shaded by cloud, however on a

sunny, cloudless day you have to look a bit harder to find that perfect light.

One of the reasons I love shooting in open shade is that you only need minimal kit, allowing you to shoot quickly and easily on location. Your DSLR or mirrorless camera and a fast portrait lens are ideal: a 50mm or 85mm lens with a fast maximum aperture, or a 70-200mm f/2.8 or f/4 telezoom. A reflector can help lift shadows sometimes, but they can be cumbersome out on location, especially if you're shooting solo.

With the basics covered, here's how you go about shooting soft, natural light portraits on location with ease...



**1 FIND A GOOD LOCATION** Choosing a suitable spot can be tricky. We want our subject to be just within the shade, so that they are bright enough to use a reasonable ISO and shutter speed, but not directly lit. Alleyways, doorways and bridges are great places to start – a narrow alleyway can act like a giant softbox, lighting your subject from the front and back at the same time.

**2 AVOID DISTRACTIONS** Pay attention to the backdrop – although it'll be out of focus, you should avoid distracting elements or bright highlights behind your subject. When scouting locations, I often find it useful to shoot an empty, defocused frame to see how the out-of-focus background will look. Pay attention to the bokeh and if anything jumps out at you right away, it could be distracting.

**3 IT'S TIME TO SHOOT** Move your subject into place. Stand them in full sun and get them to slowly step backward until their face is just in shade. In the examples to the right my model, Rosie, only stepped back around half a metre, but the difference in lighting is significant – the harsh shadows and bright highlights instantly disappear and she doesn't have to squint either.



**4 SET THE RIGHT EXPOSURE** Choose aperture-priority mode, select a low ISO and a wide aperture between f/1.8 and f/4. Use spot metering to meter from your subject's face and take a test shot. On a bright day you shouldn't have any issues with camera shake, but assess the LCD preview and histogram to check exposure. Use exposure compensation to correct any under- or overexposure as required.





## OUT IN THE OPEN

Want to learn how to give your subjects bright, sharp and natural looking eyes? Turn over the page to find out how to bring eyes to life!

Exposure: 1/1600sec at f/1.8 (ISO100)





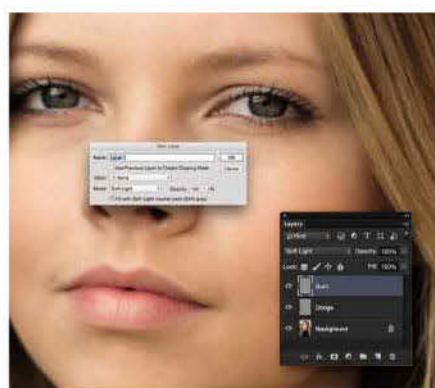
# Retouching eyes

THE EYES ARE A KEY PART OF MOST PORTRAITS. JORDAN BUTTERS SHOWS HOW TO BRING EYES TO LIFE WITH A FEW SELECTIVE TWEAKS IN PHOTOSHOP

**T**HE EYES ARE the windows to the soul, so I think they deserve some extra time and attention when editing your portraits. The eyes are the primary point of focus for anyone viewing a portrait – we are drawn to eyes first and foremost – this is why it's so important to ensure that when you capture your portrait, your focusing is spot on and the eyes are tack-sharp. Retouching eyes isn't just a case of bumping up the exposure – tastes vary from person to person, but the general idea is for your

subject's eyes to be bright and crisp, without them appearing to glow in the dark!

Eyes are a lot more receptive to what we'll call 'exaggerated' editing than the rest of the face. Significant increases in saturation, contrast and exposure, applied carefully, can enhance them, whereas similar adjustments would push more delicate features, such as skin, into the realms of bad taste. This makes selective adjustments, such as dodging and burning, and Layer Masks the perfect tools to boost your subject's gaze.



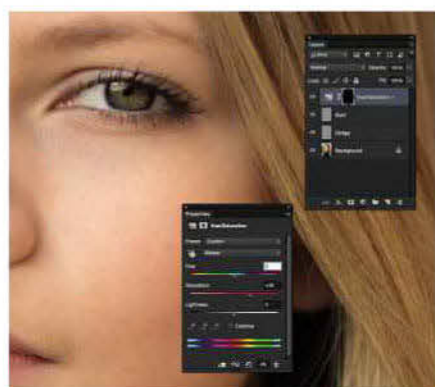
**1 CREATE NEW LAYERS** Create a new layer by pressing **shift, cmd + N** (Mac) or **shift, ctrl + N** (PC). In the menu that opens, set the **Mode** of your new layer to **Soft Light** and check the box to **Fill with Soft-Light-neutral color (50% gray)** before clicking **OK**. Then press **cmd + J** (Mac) or **ctrl + J** (PC) to duplicate this layer. Rename one of your new layers 'Dodge' and the other 'Burn'.



**2 LIGHTEN THE EYES** With your Dodge layer active, select the **Dodge tool**. In the top bar set **Range** to **Midtones** and **Exposure** to **18%**. **Brush Hardness** should be **0%** and with a brush Size that allows you to easily work on the eyes. Zoom in and brush over the whites of the eyes, the iris (the coloured part) and any catchlights in the pupils. We've marked the areas to dodge in red, above.



**3 DARKEN THE PUPILS** Make the Burn layer active and select the **Burn tool** – it's in the same group as the Dodge tool. Set the **Range** to **Midtones** and **Exposure** to **18%**, as before. Use a small brush and darken the pupils. Then, use a smaller brush to burn around the outer edge of the iris – this adds contrast and makes the iris appear three-dimensional. We've marked the areas to burn in green, above.



**4 BOOST COLOUR** Go to **Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation**. In the Adjustments palette, increase **Saturation**, concentrating on the effect it has on the eyes – ignore the rest of the image for now. Then go to **Image>Adjustments>Invert** to invert the layer mask – this hides the effect. Use the **Brush tool** with **White** set as your Foreground Color to brush the colour back into the iris.



**5 SHARPENING** In the Layers palette select the top-most layer, hold down the **alt** key and go to **Layer>Merge Visible**. Then, go to **Filter>Sharpen>Unsharp Mask**. Set the **Amount** to **150%** and **Radius** to **1.2**. Then, go to **Layer>Layer Mask>Hide All** and again, use a soft brush with **White** as your colour to brush around the iris. If you overcook it, reduce this layer's **Opacity** in the Layers palette.

## TOPTIP: Lightroom users



You can make the exact same adjustments in Adobe Lightroom too – it's even easier in fact. Use the Adjustment Brush coupled with the Exposure, Contrast, Saturation and Clarity sliders to apply the steps above and add extra punch to portraits.



# THE EYES HAVE IT

Your subject's eyes should be bright and punchy, without looking unnatural. If you go too far, reduce the opacity of your adjustments.





# MACRO MARVELS

EVERY MONTH, WE GIVE ONE OF OUR READERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO TEAM UP WITH A LEADING PROFESSIONAL FOR A ONE-TO-ONE PHOTO WORKSHOP. THIS ISSUE, CLOSE-UP SPECIALIST ROSS HODDINOTT AND READER CRAIG LOFTUS VENTURE INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE LOOKING FOR BUGS AND LITTLE CRITTERS TO SHOOT

PHOTOGRAPHING INSECTS IS notoriously difficult. Creepy crawlies can be hard to find and, even once located, they have a nasty habit of flying, jumping or scurrying away. Also, working at higher magnifications can be technically challenging. Depth-of-field is shallow and light is often in short supply. Generating a shutter speed fast enough to freeze both your own motion and that of your subject can be tricky. Wildlife photography would be boring if it were easy, though! Small subjects look amazing in close-up and, thanks to a macro lens, photographers can highlight exquisite detail – like the veining of a dragonfly's wings, or the hairs covering a butterfly's body.

Eye-catching results make all the hard graft and patience worthwhile.

For this workshop, we arranged for reader and macro novice, Craig Loftus, to spend a day with pro Ross Hoddinott. Summer and early autumn are the best times of year to search hedgerows, woodland and wetlands for interesting photogenic critters. North Devon is home to a number of nature-rich reserves, so Craig made the journey south from his home near Manchester to meet up with Ross.

When attempting to shoot insects, the weather is a key consideration. Insects typically rest, feed or roost upon flimsy grasses and flowers, so if these are windblown, it can be virtually

impossible to focus. A still day, with a wind-speed below 10mph, is best. Warm days will encourage insect activity – which is both a good and bad thing. On warm days, insects will be buzzing about, making it easier to find suitable subjects. However, they are also harder to get close to when warm and active so, while it may take you longer to locate subjects when the weather is cooler, when you do, they should prove easier to photograph.

Ross and Craig were in luck. After several days of cool and miserable weather the sunshine returned. With macro lenses at the ready, our pro and reader disappeared into the Devonian countryside on their big bug hunt!

## THE EXPERT: *Ross Hoddinott*



Ross is one of the UK's best nature and close-up photographers. He is the author of *Digital Macro and Close-up Photography*. [www.rosshoddinott.co.uk](http://www.rosshoddinott.co.uk)

**Ross's kit:** Nikon D810, NIKKOR 105mm Micro, NIKKOR 200mm Micro, Wimberley Plamp, Lastolite reflector, Gitzo Systematic tripod & Manfrotto 405 geared head.

## THE PUPIL: *Craig Loftus*



Craig is an offshore medic in the North Sea and has been taking photos seriously for over ten years. While you can often find Craig photographing landscapes and sweeping vistas, he's keen on macro photography too and wants to learn more.

**Craig's Kit:** Nikon D800, NIKKOR 105mm Micro, Manfrotto 055 tripod & Manfrotto 410 head.







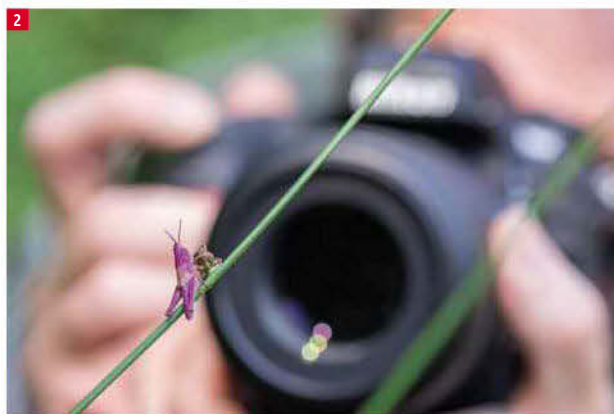


## CHALLENGE 1: STALKING INSECTS

"One of the most difficult disciplines for any nature photographer to master is stalking. Getting close to flighty or timid insects when they are going about their daily business is rarely straightforward. Stalking is a skill in its own right, but one you need to learn if you wish to capture good insect photos. Stalking insects is very different to approaching birds or mammals on foot. There is no need to dress up in camouflage clothing or disguise yourself like a bush! Instead, just wear dull coloured clothing, made from rustle-free fabrics. Craig had done a little nature photography in the past, so didn't need any prompting to dress appropriately.

"While the light can be a little harsh during the middle of the day, this is a great time for stalking, as the undergrowth is buzzing with little creatures. For his first challenge, I wanted Craig to capture a great insect close-up by finding his subject through observation and then getting close to it stealthily, shooting handheld.

"I explained to Craig that you often have to tune yourself in to nature to find subjects. You need to use your senses – listen for movement and scan grasses and wild flowers carefully for the outline of a butterfly, spider or maybe even a grasshopper. Your brain quickly begins to recognise the shapes, colour and sounds of the things you are looking for. I then explained that once you've located a subject, you will often have to move into position efficiently. Insects rarely stay still for long – particularly butterflies and dragonflies – so if you take too long, the opportunity will quickly pass. However, while you need to work quickly, you also have to take care as you approach. Insects are very sensitive to vibrations and sudden changes in light. Therefore, you need to avoid casting your shadow across your subject, and be careful not to nudge nearby vegetation – doing so will disturb your intended quarry.

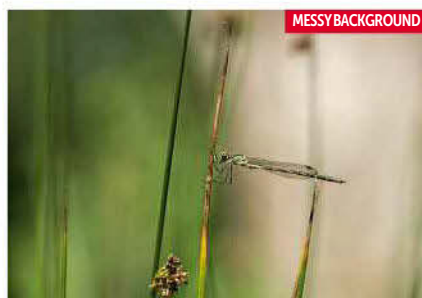


"The location we visited first was home to a number of ponds, woodland and rough grassland – great habitats for nature. Dragonflies and damselflies patrolled the fringes of the water, while grasshoppers chirped noisily among the long grasses. Craig is a Nikon user and favours the D800. This is a great camera for close-ups, recording amazing detail and capturing files large enough to crop if required. For the workshop, Craig used a NIKKOR AF-S 105mm f/2.8G VR Micro. This is a lovely lens for stalking, being powerful enough to provide a good, practical working distance from subjects, but short and compact enough to use comfortably handheld. It also has image stabilisation, which we checked was switched on. I suggested he increased ISO slightly to 400 to help generate a

- 1) Ross and Craig take a few moments to review the results taken so far before carrying on with the workshop.
- 2) Gently does it! Craig approaches his quarry, an unusual pink grasshopper, with care – poised to shoot!
- 3) Increasing the ISO and selecting a wide-to-mid aperture offers Craig a workable shutter speed for handheld shooting.
- 4) If you've got VR – turn it on! It can help eliminate shake.

workable shutter speed. I also told Craig to opt for an aperture in the region of f/5.6-f/8 – when stalking, you can't really use very small f/stops, as shutter speeds grow too long for working handheld.

"The larger dragonflies refused to settle, but Craig noticed a resting common darter and quickly began putting into practice the things we had discussed. His first shots were taken from a little too far away, so the small subject got lost amongst its surroundings. I encouraged him to nudge closer and fill the





#### THAT'S NOT CRICKET!

Craig put his skills to good use, delivering this pin-sharp image against a nicely diffused background.

**Exposure:** 1/125sec at f/8 (ISO 400)

“YOU NEED TO AVOID CASTING YOUR SHADOW ACROSS YOUR SUBJECT, AND BE CAREFUL NOT TO NUDGE NEARBY VEGETATION”



frame, which he did as his confidence grew. We found a handful of emerald damselflies resting among a clump of reeds. However, Craig's first efforts had a messy backdrop, with reeds overlapping the insect. I reminded him to consider the background and avoid any elements that distract. He tried again, selecting a slightly different angle and a wider aperture, and the result was much improved.

"Craig was doing well, but we were still missing that killer shot that says challenge complete. We then noticed a number of grasshoppers and bush crickets sheltering in grasses. Unusually, they were very tolerant of us getting close. Craig was able to apply his newfound stalking skills to capture a lovely grasshopper portrait, which was biting sharp, with the insect standing out boldly from a nice diffused background."

#### Shoot first, review later...

"Don't be afraid to take a series of shots to achieve at least one good frame. Craig shoots landscapes so he is used to being able to take a single frame and review sharpness and exposure before taking another. However, you will rarely have the luxury to do this when shooting wildlife, and the insect may have vanished by the time you go to take another – if your first effort isn't sharp, the opportunity will be lost. Therefore, I recommend you take a succession of shots before you take the camera away from your eye to check results. By doing so, you vastly increase your chances of capturing at least one perfectly sharp frame."

#### CHALLENGE 1 Pro verdict

"I threw Craig into the deep-end with this first challenge, but he coped brilliantly and learnt quickly. Due to the nature of this particular challenge, all I could do was coach from the sidelines and let Craig get on with the hard work. He stalked a wide range of subjects, from burnet moths to bush crickets. However, his shots of a pink grasshopper (an unusual genetic mutation) were my stand-out favourites from his handheld images."





## A MARBLE OF NATURE

It was this shot, actually taken after the meadow had fallen into shadow, that stood out as Ross's favourite.

Exposure: 1/250sec at f/7 (ISO 800)



## CHALLENGE 2: BACKLIGHTING

"After a quick pit stop at the local pub for something to eat and drink, we headed to a different reserve close-by – home to an acre of wild flower meadows. It was now 7:30pm and the quality of light was beginning to improve as the sun's position lowered. As predicted, the wind-speed was dropping, making our life considerably easier. The clear, still conditions were ideal for butterfly close-ups – we couldn't have hoped for better. All we needed now were some willing critters to pose for the camera!

"With wildlife, you can never guarantee what you will see. As we walked down the grassy slope towards the main meadows, I told Craig that we could find lots of subjects, or next to nothing. Thankfully, we were in luck. There were hundreds of Marbled Whites, Meadow Browns, Ringlets and Skippers flitting about. They were beginning to settle for the night on tall grasses and thistle heads. Craig already knew the challenge ahead – we discussed it on the car journey there. I wanted him to capture a beautifully backlit image. Morning and evening are the best times for shooting backlit subjects, due to the sun's low position. Backlighting works well for insect close-ups, highlighting a subject's outline and fine detail. It is also particularly well suited to butterflies, due to the translucency of their wings. Of all the species present, Marbled Whites were the most attractive, so I told Craig we would make a beeline for any resting individuals. We found plenty, but some were roosting too low among



1) With his subjects more docile in the warm evening light, Craig is able to use a tripod to ensure sharp images.

2 & 3) A wired remote release removes any camera shake and is a useful accessory for close-ups.

4 & 5) Craig carefully focuses on a marbled white and Ross reviews the results, offering advice and guidance.

grasses, and others weren't in good enough condition. We found a lovely butterfly on a thistle, but it quickly flew away when Craig tried to get closer. He had more luck with the next butterfly, though. We spotted one perched on some yellow rattle. Although close to the ground, Craig was able to get a nice clean shot of the insect. I helped by using scissors to remove a few distracting grasses growing behind where the butterfly was roosting. Craig positioned himself so that he was shooting towards the sun's direction. The low light was warm and attractive. As Craig carefully framed his shot, I told him to keep an eye on exposure – backlighting has a nasty habit of causing metering systems to underexpose results. Sure enough, Craig's first shots were around one stop under, so he applied positive compensate to achieve a better-looking histogram. In the absence of a







## “BACKLIGHTING WORKS WELL FOR INSECT CLOSE-UPS, HIGHLIGHTING A SUBJECT’S OUTLINE AND FINE DETAIL”

compatible lens hood, he shielded the front of the lens with his hand to help prevent flare. The results looked great – simple, but striking and beautifully lit. With the temperatures dipping, all the butterflies were now inactive, allowing Craig to use a tripod to aid precise focusing and framing.

"Even after shadow engulfed the meadow, we continued shooting. We found another Marbled White in a good position – perched on the top of some common

valerian. Despite the lack of directional light, the butterfly stood out nicely against the background grasses. To keep depth-of-field shallow, Craig opted for f/5.6, and focused carefully on the butterfly's eyes and head. He was able to use a remote release and his camera's mirror lock-up facility to maximise critical sharpness. The butterfly may not have been backlit, but arguably it was the best shot of the day – just goes to show that light isn't always everything."

FRONT LIGHTING



BACK LIGHTING



### Keep it parallel

"With the zone of focus being shallow at high magnification, it's important to keep as much of your subject on the plane of focus as you can. Therefore, try to position your camera parallel to the subject to help maximise depth-of-field. Rather than use AF, which can struggle to lock-on at close range, it is often better to switch to manual focus so you can focus on the eyes with greater precision."

### CHALLENGE 2 Pro verdict

"Craig was working quicker, setting up, focusing and composing with greater efficiency. Being able to use a tripod and photograph docile subjects allowed us to be more creative with light and framing. Craig fulfilled his brief nicely with his backlit Marbled White images. However, I preferred his low-light shots of a Marbled White perched on common valerian – the simplicity and tone of the image created a really pleasing close-up."





## CHALLENGE 3: EARLY RISER

"No workshop on insect photography would be complete without an early morning shoot. Dawn is one of the best times of day for photographing dormant, roosting insects. Therefore, we arranged to meet at 5am the next day in the hope of shooting dewy insects at first light. Unfortunately, the weather changed overnight and we were greeted by thick cloud and blustery conditions – had I not been meeting Craig, I would have taken one look out of my window and gone straight back to sleep! However, part of the challenge is dealing with whatever nature throws and we weren't to be deterred.

"Bleary eyed, we visited a local reservoir where you often find dozens of damselflies, and the occasional dragonfly, perched among the grasses along the water's edge. Not only was it dull and breezy, but it had remained warm overnight, so there was no dew to give subjects extra sparkle. On the positive side, we found no shortage of blue-tailed damselflies clinging to tall reeds and grasses. We searched for subjects roosting high up without too much vegetation close-by, as this would make it easier for Craig to achieve a simple and flattering clutter-free background. Having located a damselfly in a suitable position, Craig didn't have any trouble setting up his tripod close-by. However, the reed and damselfly were being badly windblown. Due to the lack of light, shutter speeds were naturally slow – even at a relatively fast aperture of f/5.6, shutter length was only 1/20sec and Craig's initial efforts were blurry and out of focus. To try and compensate, I suggested he increased the ISO from 400 to 1000, which produced a slightly more respectable speed of 1/50sec. There were brief lulls in the wind, so the best Craig could do was wait, quickly fine-tune focus, and shoot before the next gust. For precision, I suggested activating LiveView. As with any type of portrait, it is most important that the eyes are sharply in focus. Using LiveView, Craig could zoom into the subject, and focus with great precision on the damselfly's disproportionately large, bulbous eyes. Craig had to work very



quickly and – unavoidably – a high percentage of his shots were still out of focus or blurry due to movement. However, he also captured a couple of perfectly sharp results. Due to the higher ISO, the files were a little noisier, but I assured Craig that a touch of noise reduction during processing would soon sort that out. Digital really has aided close-up work; without higher ISOs performance and LiveView, Craig would have struggled to get anything usable during our early morning excursion.

"The lack of light curtailed our morning shoot and by 7am, we had decided to head back for breakfast. However, despite it being a frustrating morning, the unsociable early start had proved well worthwhile."

## CHALLENGE 3 Pro verdict

"What should have been Craig's easiest challenge ended up being his most difficult. Unlike the evening before, the conditions were against us, but Craig got on with it and his patience and perseverance was rewarded with some very respectable images of a blue-tailed damselfly – a small, fiddly insect to shoot at the best of times. For a close-up novice, Craig really came up trumps. Mission accomplished."

1) Slightly bleary-eyed, Ross and Craig carefully survey the surrounding foliage for suitable subjects.

2 & 3) Putting technology to good use – Craig increases the ISO rating to 1000 and checks the resulting images.

4) Using LiveView allows Craig to zoom in to incredible detail and make sure that his focusing is spot on.

## WORKSHOP SUMMARY: Craig Loftus



"Ross is a macro maestro and taught me a great deal in just a short time. I quickly learned that even small adjustments were significant and careful, precise

positioning of the camera was essential to achieve consistently sharp results. Also, you need to be on guard at all times for movement – either from the subject itself, wind motion, or your own body movement. You even have to control your breathing when shooting handheld and avoid any sudden jerky movements – otherwise, your subjects are gone in a blink of an eye. You certainly require bags of patience for this genre of photography, but Ross is a great teacher and his ability to spot subjects in the undergrowth is remarkable. Without his knowledge of the subjects and reserves, it would have been a huge struggle. I also learnt that you must take a succession of shots before reviewing them. An amazing day and I'm thrilled with the shots I took and my newfound close-up skills."



“AS WITH ANY TYPE OF  
PORTRAIT, IT IS MOST  
IMPORTANT THAT THE EYES  
ARE SHARPLY IN FOCUS”



**A GRIPPING REED**

Bumping up the ISO rating gave Craig the chance to capture this wonderfully sharp shot of a damselfly resting on a reed.

**Exposure:** 1/100sec at f/6.3 (ISO 1000)



# Expert Critique

WANT YOUR SHOTS CRITIQUED BY THE *DIGITAL SLR PHOTOGRAPHY* EXPERTS? TURN TO PAGE 63 TO FIND OUT HOW TO SUBMIT IMAGES

## WAITING AT BAKER STREET ➔

by Keith Truman

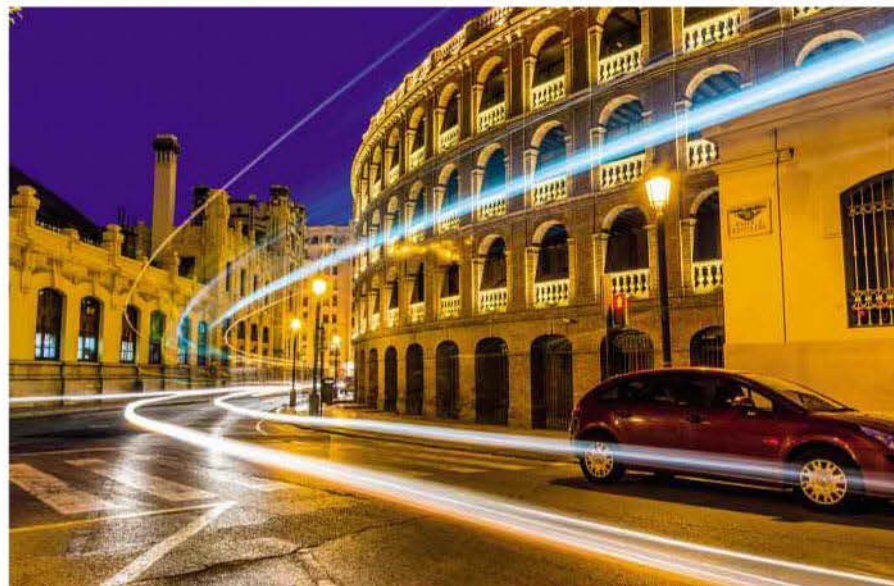
Canon EOS 5D Mk III with EF 24-105mm f/4L IS USM lens.  
Exposure: 1/20sec at f/5 (ISO 1250).

**What we think:** HDR is one of those love-it or hate-it techniques, but as with most 'Marmite' effects, any negativity usually stems from over use. However, Keith's application here is spot-on we think – the striking textures and interesting characters are well suited to the treatment. Keith's choice of symmetrical composition and his timing for spotting three varied characters in the right place at the right time is excellent – we wonder if this was a one-off fluke or if he passes this location frequently, just waiting for the right moment? Either way well done Keith – a cracking image!



### Why it works

- 1) Balanced, symmetrical composition
- 2) Perfect timing to find subjects in place
- 3) HDR effect suits subject matter well



## ⬅ TRAFFIC

by Fanita Rares Gabriel

Nikon D7100 with AF-S 18-105 mm f/3.5-5.6 G VR ED lens.  
Exposure: 15 seconds at f/16 (ISO 100).

**What we think:** This is a nice long exposure cityscape image, which is slightly spoiled by unattractive lighting – sadly there's not a lot Fanita could do to change that! We like the bending light trails acting as a lead-in line that guide your eye down the street. What we don't like is that nasty orange glow from the tungsten lights. The problem is that, had Fanita changed White Balance to Tungsten, then the sky would have looked unnaturally blue. The best solution would be shooting Raw and adjusting the WB by eye until a good balance is found, then reducing the saturation of the yellows and oranges in processing. Finally, the car on the right could have been excluded for a tidier composition.





## LOOKING INTO THE SUN ☀

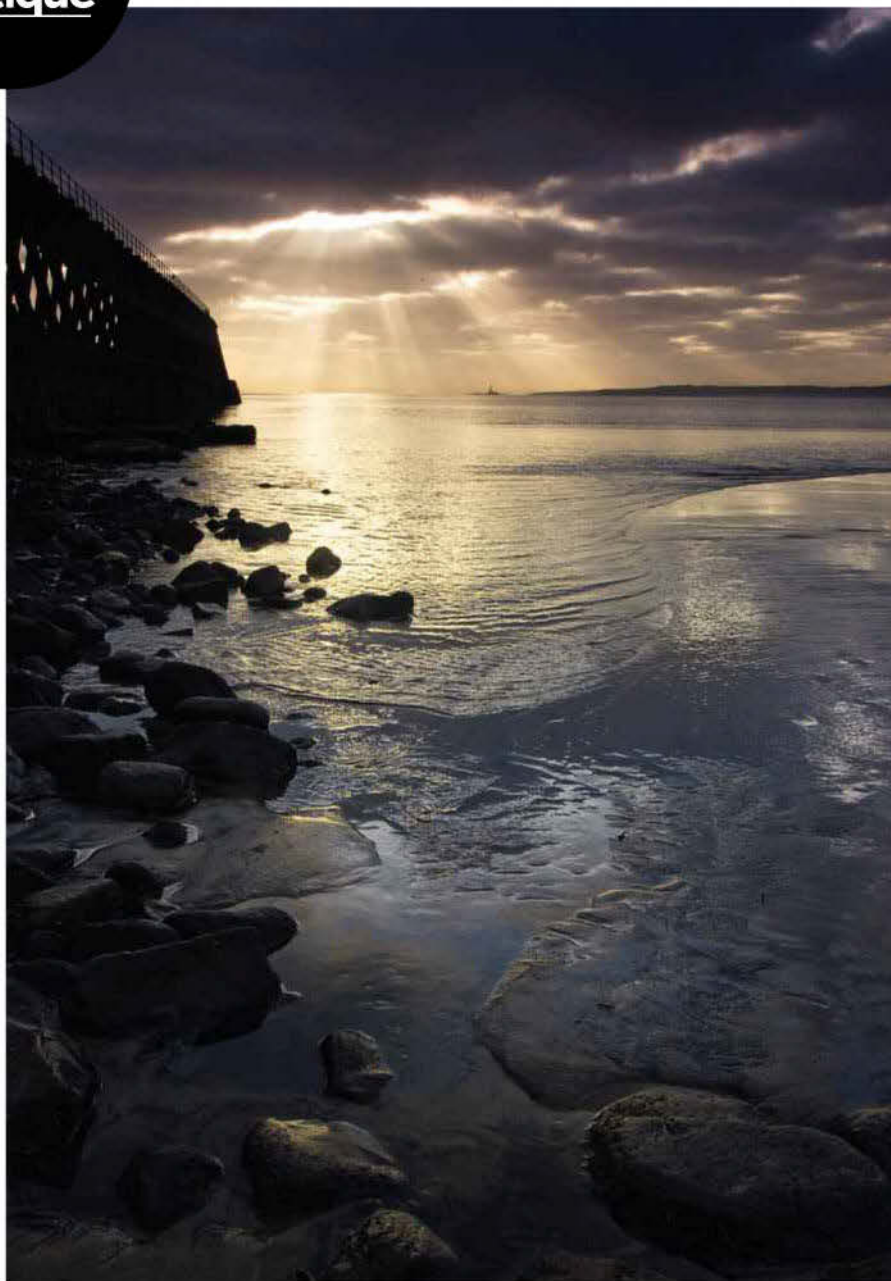
by Mariusz Zysk

Panasonic DMC-GX1 with Sigma 19mm f/2.8 DN lens.  
Exposure: 1/500sec at f/2.8 (ISO 160).

**What we think:** We were drawn to Mariusz's shot because of that golden backlight – combined with the subject matter there's an attractive, summer vibe. There are a couple of areas for improvement though. Mariusz has used a wide aperture to selectively focus on the closest flower – this technique works best with pristine subjects. Sadly, the 'hero' here looks past its best. Finding a prettier subject in equally good light would result in a stronger image. It also looks as if Mariusz has pushed the exposure too during editing; the petals have taken on a strong pink tint that doesn't look natural. It's an easy fix – simply reduce the saturation of the magenta and purple colour channels.





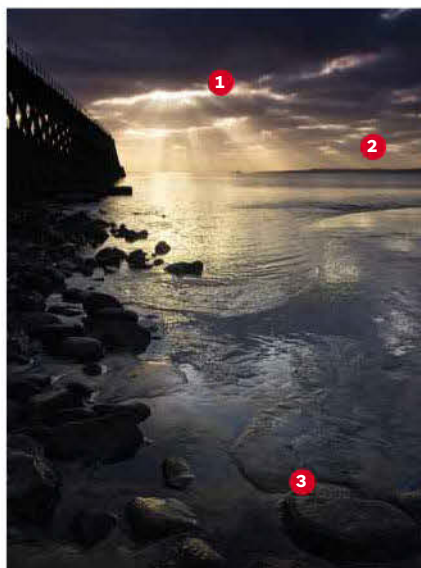


## ↑ THE VIEW TO ST MARY'S

by Norma McKellar

Canon EOS 550D with Sigma EX 10-20mm f/4-5.6 lens.  
Exposure: 1/80sec at f/16 (ISO 400).

**What we think:** The Northumberland coast is unquestionably one of the most picturesque places on the British Isles, and is an incredible location to practice landscape photography. This view, from the coast at Blyth, isn't one you see as often as some of the more popular classics in the area. Norma has captured the illusive 'God rays' here, and has done a good job of balancing the exposure to ensure they aren't blown out. We like the contrasting combination of muted blues and warm tones together. The foreground is a bit on the dark side – perhaps some selective dodging could be applied to light the mid-tones and highlights on the wet rocks? Finally, we're not sure if the inclusion of the pier adds anything to the image from this angle – it either needs to cut across the frame more prominently, or be excluded altogether.



### Why it works

- 1) Crepuscular rays captured perfectly.
- 2) Muted cool and warm tones contrast well.
- 3) Wet foreground rocks add interest.

## ↑ PRIDDY POOLS

by Mike Martin

Pentax K-r (IR-converted) with Pentax 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 lens.  
Exposure: 1/500sec at f/8 (ISO 400).

**What we think:** Shooting infrared, even with a modified digital SLR, isn't easy – although it's a lot simpler than it ever was with film! The problem is that the modified sensor doesn't see tonal values as our eyes do, so you have to use your imagination when eyeing up potential compositions. Mike has done this really well – there's a nice balance to the components within the frame and that dark area in the foreground is a great leading line. Our only, minor, complaint is that the distribution of clouds is a little messy, with some breaking out of the top and sides of the frame. If Mike had the spare time, we'd have suggested waiting for a more pleasing and photogenic distribution of clouds to drift into shot. We're being picky – the composition here is hard to improve!





## INFRARED EXPERT *Lee Frost*



"Mike chose a great scene for his shot, and also took it in ideal conditions. Sunny days are a winner for IR because blue sky goes dark while fluffy clouds stand out starkly. The composition works well, with the dark area of water between the foreground reeds leading the eye into the scene and the tallest tree on the ridge acting as a focal point. I've had a go at editing Mike's original shot – I converted it to mono using Silver Efex Pro and tweaked the Contrast and Structure to give the image punch. Next, I selected the sky using the Lasso tool and adjusted Curves to darken it further, selected the foreground and adjusted Curves to add contrast, then created a Duplicate Layer, added Diffuse Glow and lowered opacity to leave a faint glow in the highlights. Finally, I cloned out the messy clouds."

B&W CONVERSION



OUT OF CAMERA





**dp1**

*Quattro*

Wide

19mm (28mm) F2.8

**dp2**

*Quattro*

Standard

30mm (45mm) F2.8

**dp3**

*Quattro*

Mid-tele

50mm (75mm) F2.8

**SIGMA**

[sigma-global.com](http://sigma-global.com)

**dp**  
*Quattro*

Reinventing the camera  
Reinventing DP



With a uniquely structured sensor delivering breathtaking resolution, the dp Quattro range rivals even high-end DSLR cameras. Straight and to the point, it's the SIGMA philosophy updated and renewed.



GOOD DESIGN AWARD 2014

**GOLD  
AWARD**





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## HOW TO GET YOUR IMAGES TO US...

**EMAIL:** If you want to email submissions, send them to: [submissions@dslrphotomag.co.uk](mailto:submissions@dslrphotomag.co.uk). Please only email images at a maximum of 1,000 pixels along the longest edge (note: your email will be rejected if the total size of attachments exceeds 8MB). Tell us which article(s) you're submitting to in the subject line and include your name, address and daytime number.

**FACEBOOK:** Join us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/digitalslrphoto](http://www.facebook.com/digitalslrphoto). Become a part of the community and post your best shots to our wall. We regularly monitor the page and will be in touch if your work catches our eye!

**FLICKR:** Visit: [www.flickr.com/groups/digitalslrphoto](http://www.flickr.com/groups/digitalslrphoto) to upload your images to our Flickr group.

**POST:** Burn your high-res images as JPEGs onto a CD/DVD, including a 'mugshot', and produce a contact sheet with location and technical details. Put it all in an envelope with a covering letter, including the submission form below and post to: *Digital SLR Photography*, PO BOX 1327, Stamford, Lincs PE2 2PT. Enclose an SAE if you'd like them returned.

### Digital SLR Photography contact form

Tick a box and fill in your details if you would like to submit images or take part in *Photo Workshop*.



☐ Workshop



☐ Portfolio



☐ Expert Critique



☐ General

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Checklist

- ✓ If submitting images by post, remember to include your 'mugshot' and contact details (name, address, email and daytime number).
- ✓ Please don't send us high-res images by email: resize your shots to 1,000 pixels along the longest edge and if we see something we like, we'll request the high-res file from you!
- ✓ Emails exceeding 8MB total size might not arrive, so split your submission down into two or more emails to ensure they get through.
- ✓ Please don't send us your entire portfolio – as you may appreciate we receive a lot of submissions and aren't able to look through hundreds of images – narrow the selection down and pick your best shots only.

For a full set of picture guidelines, or to ask any questions, please email [enquiries@dslrphotomag.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@dslrphotomag.co.uk)





*The* Ultimate Photo Guide

# WILDLIFE

REGARDLESS OF SUBJECT OR HABITAT, THE TECHNIQUE, KIT AND FIELD CRAFT REQUIRED TO TAKE COMPELLING AND BEAUTIFUL WILDLIFE IMAGES IS ACTUALLY VERY SIMILAR. BY LEARNING FROM THE EXAMPLES IN OUR *ULTIMATE GUIDE*, YOU WILL SOON BE TAKING PICTURES LIKE THE PROS

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Words: ROSS HODDINOTT & BEN HALL

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IMAGE: BEN HALL







# ESSENTIAL KIT FOR WILDLIFE

WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHERS HAVE NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD! ADVANCES IN CAMERA AND LENS PERFORMANCE ARE HELPING PHOTOGRAPHERS CAPTURE ACTION AND BEHAVIOUR THAT – NOT LONG AGO – WAS UNIMAGINABLE...

**Y**OU COULD ARGUE that no other subject is as challenging or varied as wildlife. Getting within picture-taking range of wild animals can prove difficult enough, let alone taking photos of them. With wildlife ranging from small to big, we decided to divide our *Ultimate Guide* into two parts. Last month (August, issue 105), we focused on all things small, for example: insects, reptiles and pondlife. This issue, we tailor our advice for larger creatures, such as birds, deer and urban wildlife.

Without a doubt, birds and mammals are the most appealing and popular wildlife subjects. There are just so many potential variants, from large, majestic deer stags, to colourful and busy songbirds found in your own back garden. Wherever you live, you are never far away from exciting quarry. In the UK, we enjoy extensive coastline and lots of little, uninhabited islands offshore. These places are often a haven for nesting seabirds. Islands like Skomer, Bass Rock and the Farnes are the perfect place to visit for any aspiring wildlife shooter. Wetland habitats are equally good places for locating subjects – marshes, estuaries and mudflats are often nature rich, and during winter large flocks of migrating birds can create photogenic spectacles. Woodlands, moorland, parks and gardens are also good places for finding and photographing wildlife. Don't overlook urban environments, either. Nature is superb at adaptation and foxes, deer, grey squirrels and peregrines are among the animals that have adapted to the presence of man and learnt to thrive in our towns and cities.



BEN HALL

Right: Don't dismiss composing a wider perspective, showing a creature within the context of its natural habitat. Above: A long telephoto fills the frame with shy or flighty subjects, allowing you to record natural behaviour.

## WILDLIFE *Camera settings*



**ISO:** Recent generations of digital SLR perform well at higher sensitivities – especially at the top end of the scale; models such as the Nikon D4 and Canon EOS-1DX. Therefore, don't be afraid to select an ISO upwards of 1600 if the situation requires it. Doing so will help generate a shutter speed fast enough to shoot in low light or freeze fast action. However, you should still always employ the lowest ISO practical to maximise image quality.



**SHUTTER-PRIORITY MODE:** Shutter-priority (S or Tv) exposure mode is often the preferred choice when you wish to determine the appearance of motion. This mode allows you to select the shutter speed required, with the camera automatically setting the corresponding aperture.



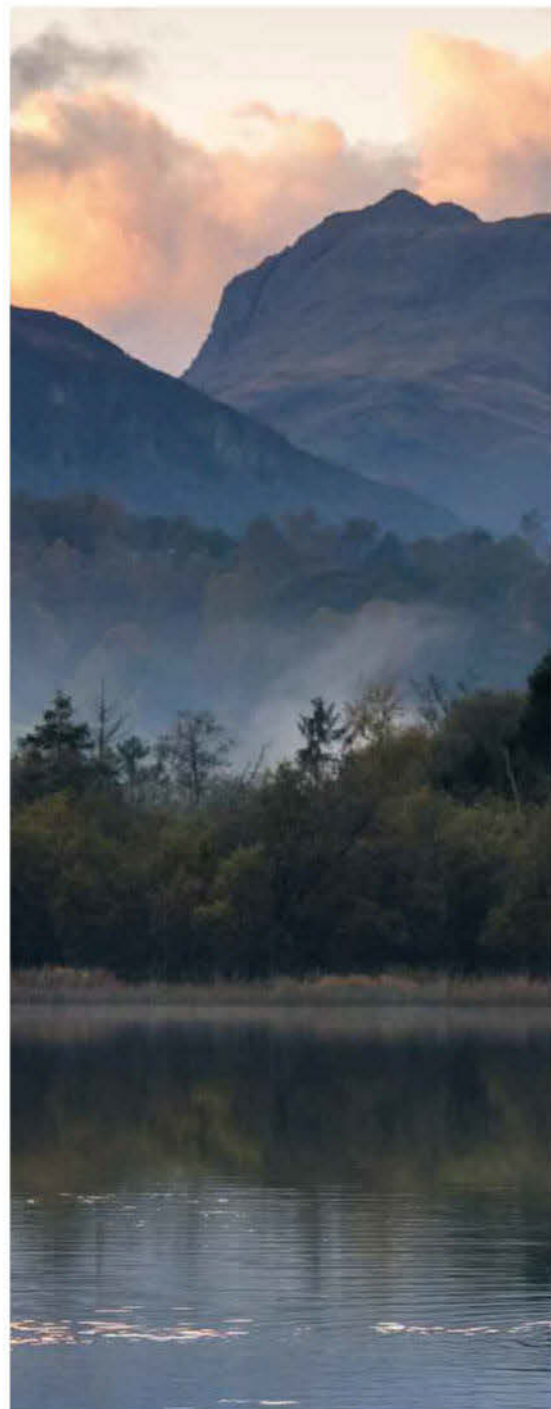
**METERING MODE:** Use your camera's multi-zone metering mode to obtain a good exposure – Nikon call it Matrix mode, while Canon refer to it as Evaluative metering. It will take multiple, independent light readings from across the frame before averaging them out to achieve the 'correct' overall exposure. In most situations, it is very reliable and accurate.



**AF MODE:** When shooting moving subjects, like flight, switch your camera to predictive AF mode, selecting a cluster of focusing points to give you a large focusing area. For static subjects, switch to a single focus point – this will increase focusing accuracy.



**DRIVE MODE:** Set your camera to its continuous high drive mode. Doing so will allow you to shoot large burst sequences of images with a single press of the shutter, vastly improving your chances of getting 'the shot'.



## WILDLIFE *Essential kit*



**TELEPHOTO/TELEZOOM:** Animals are often hard to get close to; so a long lens is essential. Usually, at least 300mm is required, but for small subjects, or ones at a distance, you may need a 400mm or 500mm lens. Alternatively, 70-300mm and 80-400mm telezooms are a versatile choice. They tend to be cheaper, but slower, with a maximum aperture around f/5.6. However, with newer cameras, you can compensate for slower optics by increasing ISO – good news for those on a budget. Fast, prime telephotos are ideal, but they're heavy and can cost thousands. Newer tech, like Nikon's Phase Fresnel lenses, help reduce the size of longer telephotos.



**WIDE-ANGLE:** You might be surprised at this, but a wide-angle lens is also often well suited to shooting wildlife. In situations where you are able to get close to your subject, or if it's within an attractive setting, a shorter focal length will help you capture a less conventional result, showing the subject in proper context with its environment. This approach can create more interesting, creative and informative results. A focal length in the region of 24-35mm is a good choice as they offer a wide angle of view without too much distortion. In the right situation, even an ultra wide-angle or fisheye lens can create very quirky looking nature shots, providing you can get close!





ROSS HODDINOTT

## WILDLIFE Q&A

### Q) Is it worth buying a hide?

**A)** A hide is an essential piece of kit for a variety of subjects. Wild animals are very sensitive to human activity and movement – a hide is the perfect way to disguise your whereabouts. You could make your own hide in situ, using branches and other natural materials. However, a simple, collapsible hide is a good option. They don't cost a fortune and most employ shock-corded poles, just like a tent, in order to make them easy to set up and pack away again. They are light to carry, too, and some even have an integrated chair. Wildlife Watching Supplies are among the leading brands of camouflaged hides and accessories.

### Q) Is my car any good as a hide?

**A)** Yes, actually a car can prove a very useful hide. Animals often hunt or rest close to roads and verges. You can spot wildlife along small, country lanes, particularly on moorland, where grouse, curlews, buzzards and other birds perch on dry stonewalls or raised banks. You may even photograph deer, or owls hunting above farmland in the evening light. Using your vehicle as a mobile hide is often convenient and effective, disguising the human shape and allowing a closer approach than if you were on foot. Just be considerate where you park.

### Q) Is a motor drive worth the money?

**A)** A vertical battery grip (or motor drive) increases a camera's frame rate and also improves its handling. They attach via its battery compartment and hold extra batteries to extend the camera's battery life. They also tend to be designed with a secondary shutter release button to aid shooting portrait style compositions. If you shoot a lot of action and your camera's native frame rate isn't proving fast enough, then a motor drive will prove a very good investment.

### Q) How important is researching subjects?

**A)** Very. Subject knowledge will save you time in the long-run and greatly increase your chances of successful images. These days it is easy to do your homework; search online and find out about an animal's preferred diet, habitat, behaviour, breeding patterns and even migratory information. Also, research whereabouts you are likely to locate subjects. Some subjects will be local to you, but for others you will need to travel to a specific place.



**TELE-CONVERTER:** A tele-converter is an optical component that you place between camera body and lens. They come in 2x, 1.7x and 1.4x strengths and multiply the focal length of the

lens by that factor. Therefore, they are ideal accessories for increasing the range and versatility of your existing lenses. As such, they are popular among action and nature photographers, being a lighter, cheaper option than a powerful telephoto. However, they do degrade image quality and absorb a stop or two of light, depending on the magnification. Buy the best quality you can afford. Also check compatibility beforehand, as not all lenses can be coupled with a converter.



**GIMBAL HEAD:** Wildlife photographers are often using long, heavy optics, working from a hide, or tracking fast action. As a result, they require a specialised tripod head. Traditional ball and

socket or pan/tilt designs aren't suited to the demands of shooting nature using heavy lenses – a gimbal head is better. These are designed so your camera and lens are balanced at their centre of gravity. Benro, Custom Brackets, Really Right Stuff and Wimberley are among those to consider. They can be costly, but are a good long-term investment for regular users of big, heavy telephoto lenses – they make the lens feel weightless, enabling smooth and easy subject tracking.



**MONOPOD:** While a tripod still offers unrivalled support, using one is often impractical and cumbersome when stalking wildlife. When you are on the move, a monopod is often the

better option. They have just one leg, with two or three extendable sections, so you can adjust the monopod to the exact height required. Their simplicity and ease of use make them well suited to nature and sport photographers using long, weighty telephoto lenses, which are incredibly hard to handhold and keep stable, especially over extended periods of time. A monopod is especially useful if you are using a lens without image stabilisation.



# CAPTURE WILD BIRDS

BIRDS INHABIT ALMOST EVERY TYPE OF ENVIRONMENT AND THEIR SHEER DIVERSITY MAKES THEM AN OUTSTANDING SUBJECT TO PHOTOGRAPH

**W**HEREVER YOU ARE, there is never a shortage of feathered subjects nearby and they offer endless opportunities for capturing stunning wildlife shots. However, they are also one of the hardest subjects to master – know-how, good technique and quick responses are all key skills for budding bird photographers.

There is such a wide variety of birds on the planet, that generalising about technique is always a hard thing to do. Birds can be large or tiny, fast or flightless, difficult to locate or breed together in vast numbers. Your exact approach and the kit required will vary from subject to subject. However, regardless of species, there are certain rules you can always apply to your bird photography. Firstly, you ideally need a good range of focal lengths to help you cope with the variety of subjects and situations you will likely encounter. For distant subjects, you will want a 400mm or 500mm focal length, or – if you are on a budget – consider using a shorter telephoto and teleconverter.

One of the most important aspects of your bird images is the subject's surroundings. Whether you are capturing a close-up portrait shot, or wider environmental view, what you decide to include and exclude from the frame will greatly influence the look, impact and atmosphere of your final shot. Sometimes, just the slightest change in viewpoint will allow you to alter the look of the bird's background. Areas of deep shade will form dark, inky backgrounds, creating drama and low-key results.

If you wish to capture images that are less generic and have greater sense of environment, try using a shorter focal length and include more of the subject's surroundings. Again, you need to think carefully about what to include within the image frame. Seabird colonies are a good place for capturing this type of shot. Firstly, birds tend to be easier to get close to, making it possible to shoot with a short focal length. Secondly, their coastal location and the other nesting birds around them help create obvious context. Suburban, wetland and woodland environments also work well as interesting and recognisable backgrounds when photographing birds.

Birds rarely stay still long, so you have to be able to react and work quickly when opportunities present themselves. If you are still relatively new to shooting moving subjects, it is worthwhile practising adjusting ISO, aperture and focus settings until you can alter each one intuitively without taking your eye away from the viewfinder. This will

help you to react quickly to the action as it unfolds. Subject knowledge is important too. Understanding a bird's behaviour, diet and habitat will greatly help you successfully locate and get close to subjects.

Photographs of birds in flight, courting, hunting, feeding or fighting will reveal much more about the subject and possess more impact than a simple shot of a 'bird on a stick'. The more you observe, the easier it is to predict what they are about to do next – and anticipating action is one of the key skills for any wildlife photographer.

Birds are often fast moving, so you will often need to rely on your camera's autofocus. Select predictive focus mode and keep the focusing point (or cluster of points) over the subject and smoothly pan with it to track its movement, while keeping the shutter semi-depressed. When you do this, the lens will continually track the subject and adjust focus. Larger subjects are slower and easier to follow, so if you are new to shooting movement, start by photographing birds such as geese, swans, herons, kites and buzzards. Don't be afraid

to shoot large bursts of images – doing so will greatly increase your chances of capturing successful flight shots. You'll be surprised how quickly you pick up the technique.

When shooting flight or action, it is worth framing shots more loosely. By including a little extra space around your subject, you give yourself leeway for error – if necessary, you can crop the image later in order to tidy up the

composition. A small degree of cropping won't significantly degrade image quality, given the high resolution of digital SLRs today. When composing images, it is often best to include space in front of the subject for it to look into. Doing so will also help place your subject off-centre for a more stimulating composition. There are always exceptions, though. When a bird is looking or flying straight into camera, it will often look best placed centrally in the frame.

To freeze moving birds, a rapid shutter speed should be your priority – ideally, upwards of 1/1000sec. However, you may not always want to record your subject sharply. A slower shutter, in the region of 1/15sec, together with a smooth panning motion will capture a degree of motion blur. A bird's beating wings will blur, creating an enhanced feeling of motion and energy. It's a hard technique to master and you will need to experiment with shutter length to achieve just the right effect. It can be very hit and miss, but when the technique works, results can look amazing and creative.

## PRO TIP

One of the best ways to get close to birds is by using suitable food or water to entice them – the type of food varies depending on the subject, so do your research. Baiting allows you to entice a subject to a position where you know the light and background will compliment the species.

## THAT'S SWAN WAY TO DO IT

A bird's translucent feathers make them the ideal candidates for beautiful golden backlighting, such as this.

Exposure: 1/1000sec at f/4.2 (ISO 400)

## TECHNIQUE Be aware of the backdrop



**1** For portraits of birds, simplicity is often best. Background choice is very important. A diffused, clutter-free backdrop will typically work best and help your subject stand out boldly. In this instance, the surroundings are messy and the bird is positioned too centrally in frame to create a strong result.





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## TOP FIVE Popular UK birds



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● **PUFFIN:** Low, eye-to-eye viewpoints often work best. During the summer, they will regularly bring sand eels and fish back to their burrows to feed their young. See this month's *Photo Skills* on page 32 for an in-depth guide.



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● **GANNET:** Bass Rock, in northeast England, is home to the largest gannet colony in the world. The Farnes and Bempton Cliffs are also good locations for getting close to birds. Look for interaction: birds touching bills, or squabbling.



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● **BARN OWL:** Although mostly nocturnal, they can be found hunting over grassland around daybreak and in the warm, evening light. You will likely need a fast telephoto, or use a high ISO rating to generate a sufficiently fast shutter.



ROSS HODDINOTT

● **OYSTERCATCHER:** An attractive wader. They love inland freshwater, and coastal shorelines. A low view will help separate the birds and their surroundings, or you could look to silhouette them against the sun or reflections on the water.



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● **MUTE SWAN:** Large wetland birds – they are highly photogenic, but bright, white plumage can fool metering into underexposure. Check histograms regularly. In spring and summer, cygnets offer extra photo opportunities.



**2** To help achieve a diffused background, try a long focal length combined with large aperture – in the region of f/4 or f/5.6. This will generate a shallow depth-of-field and help eliminate unwanted distractions from the backdrop. A tighter crop and placing the bird off-centre creates a stronger shot.



IMAGES: ROSS HODDINOTT

**3** Colour and light can also play a significant role in the impact of bird portraits, so position yourself thoughtfully. For example, flowering heather, autumnal foliage, or deep blue water provide striking, interesting and colourful backdrops. In this instance, a pastel evening sky provides the perfect background.



# HOME IN ON GARDEN BIRDS

MOST GARDENS HAVE REGULAR VISITS FROM A VARIETY OF BIRDS, SO MAKE SURE YOU KNOW HOW BEST TO PREPARE TO CAPTURE SOME GREAT IMAGES FROM CLOSE TO HOME

IT IS ALL TOO easy to think that great wildlife photographs can only be taken in far-flung, exotic locations. In reality, this couldn't be further from the truth. Back gardens can be a haven for wildlife and, with a good feeding station, can provide you with enough subject matter to keep you busy for months, even years! A telephoto or telezoom lens will be required for small birds, but with the use of a modest hide, or even shooting out of an open window, 300mm upwards should provide enough reach. Small birds such as tits and finches have lightning fast reactions and don't hang around in the same spot for long, so make use of the high-speed drive mode on your camera. This will enable you to fire off a burst of images at a time, giving you a higher chance of capturing the optimum moment. When choosing a position for your feeding station, look for an area with a distant background. Birds will only come to feed if they feel safe, so resist the temptation to put the feeders right out in the open. Instead, make sure they are close enough to any nearby trees, hedges or bushes, and high enough from the ground to be safe from prowling cats! To keep your shots looking as natural as possible, hunt around for some photogenic perches to attach near to the feeders, but make sure they are in keeping with the birds' natural habitat. Lichen, or moss covered branches will work well and add a splash of colour.

You will find that by putting out different food, you should be able to attract a variety of species. Peanuts and sunflower seeds will

bring members of the tit family and nuthatches, while nyjer seed is a goldfinch favourite. Robins and dunnocks are particularly partial to mealworms, which can be bought from a pet shop. You could even try apples, which should attract blackbirds and thrushes. It is vital that you keep the food supply topped up. Try to use a simple pole in which you can hang three or four feeders from, this way you can cater for a variety of species and attract them all to the same spot. When attaching the perches, place them slightly higher than the feeders, as birds usually approach from above and will be more likely to use them as a stopping point en route to the food. Use a wide aperture to ensure the background is blown well out of focus. For portrait images, simplicity is key. Your images should be as clean as possible, with nothing to distract the eye from the

## PRO TIP

Watch for birds hovering next to the feeder. They often do this if there is no space to land, this is your chance to try for a flight shot!



ALL IMAGES: BEN HALL

**Above:** Why not try to portray the garden environment, use a washing line with clothes pegs for an interesting perch. **Right:** Placing feeders below overhanging branches is a surefire way to achieve natural-looking results.

subject. Shutter speed is also vital, as small birds move incredibly fast as they flit about from perch to perch. We recommend a shutter speed of at least 1/500sec, so watch your exposure carefully and increase your ISO rating if your shutter speed drops. Often, if there are large numbers of birds coming into feed at once, squabbles break out. This is your opportunity to capture more dramatic images showing interaction and behaviour. You will need to freeze their movement so even faster shutter speeds are recommended: 1/1000sec and above should ensure a sharp shot. Don't forget to get creative though. Dialling in a slower shutter speed of between 1/30sec and 1/80sec to blur the movement can produce some interesting and artistic results, but be prepared to take plenty of images!

## GARDEN BIRDS *Favourites with photographers*



● **TITS & FINCHES:** Some of the usual garden birds include blue tits and chaffinches. Never overlook the common species – try to come up with interesting ways to photograph them.



● **WOODPECKERS:** Greater spotted woodpeckers often visit feeders. Put out a log and drill some holes into it, you can then stuff the holes with fat or peanuts to attract them into position.



● **ROBINS:** A garden favourite – robins are very partial to mealworms. They prefer to feed from trays, so have a perch ready just above the bait to capture natural-looking images.



● **JAYS:** Jays may be tempted down from the skies with acorns. If you spot one, take care not to make any sudden movements – they are very wary birds and will be gone in an instant!



#### FEEDING TIME

Position your feeder carefully – place it well away from the background, but not too far from bushes or trees.

Exposure: 1/320sec at f/5 (ISO 100)





# STAKE OUT WILD DEER

WITH A GOOD NUMBER OF DEER PARKS SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE UK, DEER CAN BE A RELATIVELY ACCESSIBLE SUBJECT AND CAN MAKE A GREAT LONG-TERM PROJECT

**R**ED DEER ARE the UK's largest land mammal and are a very impressive sight. Fallow deer should not be overlooked, however, as their variation in colour and markings make them particularly photogenic. Most deer that inhabit parks are accustomed to being around people, so it's not essential to use a monster lens. A focal length of around 300–400mm is usually plenty, and a teleconverter can be added to gain some extra reach. It's worth avoiding a 2x converter and opt for a more modest 1.4x, which only results in a light reduction of one stop. Although new teleconverters on the market are a big improvement, the 1.4x will still give a noticeably sharper result than the 2x converter.

The most productive time of day to photograph deer is early morning. Following a cold but clear night, mist often forms at dawn. Shooting into the light in these conditions can create a wonderful atmosphere and help to take your images to the next level. Backlighting will adorn your images with a golden hue and is most effective when the sun is very close to the horizon. For this reason, it pays to arrive on location before first light. It is worthwhile spending time searching for a subject that is in a photogenic location, rather than settling for the first deer you come across. Look for a clean background that you can blow out of

Right: Deer silhouettes during the golden hour – get it right and you'll be rewarded with some truly incredible images. Below: Colourful heather makes for a diffused backdrop when shot with a wide aperture and telezoom lens.

## WILDLIFE *Main deer species*



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● **RED DEER:** These large and impressive British land mammals can be found in number at most deer parks throughout the UK.

● **FALLOW DEER:** Trickier to spot, as they are usually found in a woodland habitat, rather than in open ground. Also inhabit parklands.

● **ROE DEER:** Wild deer such as roe deer can be difficult to approach. Remain downwind at all times and refrain from washing your clothes too often – their sense of smell is second to none!

focus and try to include some foreground to help give your images a three-dimensional quality. Shooting into the light results in a wonderful rim-lit effect, which highlights the form of your subject. When composing your shots, try to design and visualise the picture in your mind, look at your surroundings and decide what you would like to both include and eliminate from the frame. Usually simple compositions are the most effective, but you may find elements of the landscape that can be used as a natural frame, such as foliage, trees, or branches. Avoid the temptation to get as close as possible to your subject, instead, look for ways in which you can include the environment. Care must be taken when exposing for a backlit subject. You may need to add some positive exposure compensation, though the amount will depend on the tones in your image. A quick check of the histogram will tell you how much compensation you will need to apply, but don't forget to keep checking, as the light will change rapidly, especially at dawn!

## OH DEER!

Deer are the ideal subjects for striking wildlife silhouettes due to their instantly recognisable shape.

**Exposure:** 1/5000sec at f/5.6 (ISO 800)



## TECHNIQUE *Golden backlight*



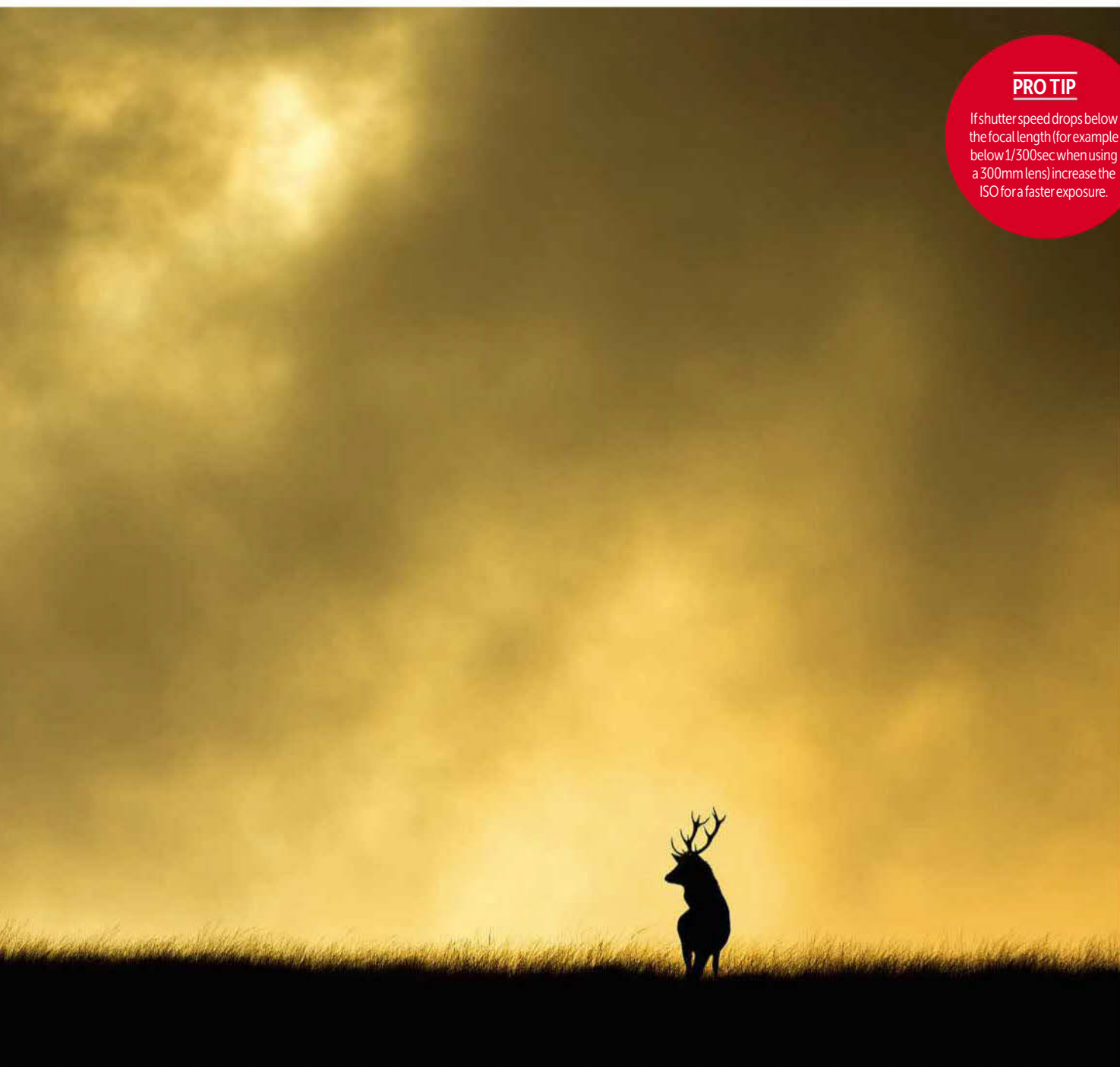
**1** Arrive early to your location to give you time to search for the most suitable subject. The light is at its very best quality for only a short period, so make sure you are set up and ready to take advantage of it.





**PRO TIP**

If shutter speed drops below the focal length (for example below 1/300sec when using a 300mm lens) increase the ISO for a faster exposure.



ALLIMAGES: BEN HALL



**2** By shooting towards the sun you should be able to create a golden glow, rim lighting your subject. Watch out for flare – a lens hood should help, but you may need to fine-tune your shooting angle.



**3** Compose your images by placing the subject off-centre and looking into the picture. This gives the subject room to breathe within the image. Look for elements of the landscape to create a natural frame.



**4** Go wide to show the deer in its natural habitat. These images can work beautifully and really pull the viewer in. They also show the relationship and scale between the subject and the environment.



# URBAN & PARK WILDLIFE

AS COMMUNITIES ENCROACH ON RURAL AREAS, IT'S NO SURPRISE TO SEE THAT WILDLIFE IS BECOMING MORE COMMONPLACE IN URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

**A**T FIRST SIGHT, our cities and towns may not seem to be the ideal places for nature photography, but with the ever increasing pressure on our countryside, urban areas are fast becoming important havens for wildlife. Peregrines have taken residence in many cities around the UK, and numbers are increasing every year. To attempt a Peregrine photo project you will need to put in plenty of ground work and be prepared to visit a number of times to establish the birds regular perching spots. Also note that the Peregrine Falcon is a 'Schedule 1' protected species so to photograph it at, or near the nest will require a licence from Natural England. Often, distant shots are more effective, however, as they show the environment and tell more of a story about the subject and the landscape. A long focal length will still be required, but think carefully about the background; if the bird occupies a small area of the frame, place it on one of the intersecting thirds and use the urban background to tell the story. Images that give out a message are often the most rewarding.

Hedgehogs are native to the UK, and usually inhabit urban parks and gardens. They are shy mammals and not usually very tolerant of human presence, but with a little care and ingenuity you should find it relatively easy to coax them into an area of your choice by using bait. The trick here is to make your chosen area look as natural as possible. If the ground is concrete spread some leaves over it to make it resemble a

Below: Parks with lakes are great places to find swans, grebes and other birds. Following a cold but clear night, mist often forms on water, this should give you the opportunity to capture atmospheric shots of the birds.

woodland floor. Mossy stumps, gnarled logs and other woodland litter can add to the effect. If you put food out daily, you should soon be rewarded with a regular visitor, which will give you ample opportunity to capture some great shots. Shoot at eye level with a long lens – 300mm or above – this will give you a narrow angle-of-view, making it easier to get a clean backdrop.

When looking at backgrounds it is important to consider colour and tone, too. An area of shadow will result in a dark

background, and will help the subject stand out. Colour should also be taken into account, and can be used to either complement or contrast with your subject.

Take care when composing your shots, and look at every inch of the frame to make sure there is nothing too distracting poking into or out of the picture.

Moving just a couple of feet in either direction can make a dramatic difference to the result. A beanbag is a more effective means of support than a tripod here, allowing you to get low, giving you more freedom and making composition easier.

Parks offer plenty of opportunity to capture wildlife that has been habituated to human presence. Grey squirrels are often so tame that they feed from the hand. For something a little different, try to capture quirky images of them peering around trees. Timing and observing is important to capture the perfect moment.

Urban lakes are usually home to a variety of wildfowl. Ducks, swans and grebes make fantastic subjects, especially if you are able to return regularly. Visit early in the morning and you may be lucky enough to capture them swimming through a veil of mist.

## PRO TIP

Shoot at eye level for a more intimate view and include elements of the environment to help tell a story through your photographs.

## URBAN Common wildlife



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● **PEREGRINE FALCON:** There are nesting pairs of peregrine in many cities around the UK including Manchester and London. They are a protected species in the UK, so should only be photographed from afar and never disturbed.



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● **HEDGEHOGS:** Hedgehogs can be tempted with bait – try minced meat or dog food. It is not advisable to leave milk out as it can be harmful to their digestive system, instead leave a small amount of water in a shallow bowl.



DOUG MERRICK

● **BADGERS:** Found in woodland, often near pasture, across much of Great Britain. These peaceful and photogenic creatures are protected by law, so are best photographed using a long lens so as not to disturb them.



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● **GREY SQUIRRELS:** Perhaps not the most exciting subject, but one that we're all used to seeing in parks across the country. Squirrels that inhabit urban parks are usually accustomed to people and will allow a very close approach.



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● **FOXES:** Regular visitors to urban areas, foxes tend to scavenge for food during the night. They will often revisit the same location over again, so try baiting a predefined spot over a period of time to tempt one within range.



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**FANTASTIC MR FOX**

If you spot an urban fox prowling, setting up in a photogenic location and being patient can reap you rewards.

**Exposure:** 1/500sec at f/4.5 (ISO 400)







IN ASSOCIATION WITH



# ALPINE ADVENTURE

HIKING ACROSS EUROPE'S MOST EXTENSIVE MOUNTAIN SYSTEM IN SEARCH OF SPECTACULAR IMAGES WAS LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHER STEFAN HEFELE'S LATEST EXPEDITION. HE TALKS TO CAROLINE SCHMIDT ABOUT HIS TURBULENT TOUR AND THE RARE VIEWS HE ENCAPSULATED

Words: CAROLINE SCHMIDT

**F**ROM HOMELY MOUNTAIN pastures and heavenly meadows with waterfalls to mystic forests and rugged, snowy mountain ranges – the Alps are like another planet,” describes photographer Stefan Hefe. And when you put it like that, what landscape photographer wouldn’t want to lose themselves in such wilderness – especially a 29-year-old with an aptitude for hiking and bivouac. An eight-day

tour across Europe’s highest mountain system is no mean feat, especially when it entails climbing as much as 2,700m above sea level, carrying 20kg of photography kit.

The Alps cross eight Alpine countries: Italy, Slovenia, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Germany, France and Austria; Stefan concentrated on the middle section, travelling north from Austria to the French Alps, through Switzerland and the Northern

Italian Alps. It’s a journey that exposed him to diverse micro climates, raw weather and breathtaking scenery; an extreme physical and photographic challenge – all in the name of capturing the “awesomeness of Mother Nature” explains Stefan. “The purpose was to get some unique photographs of a very special landscape and to share them with the world, with the hope of sharpening people’s awareness of protecting it,” he adds. ➡



### BIOGRAPHY



German commercial and professional landscape photographer, Stefan Hefe has carved a career out of creating diverse and aweing images. Stefan's landscapes are a true glorification of the world's natural beauty. His images are sold by stock agencies to magazines and represented by many well-known publishers including GEO, which has produced his latest calendar called *Mountains 2016*. Although Stefan has photographed across the globe, from the US to Europe and Asia, he openly admits to having a weakness for Nordic landscapes. However, it's his most recent tour to the Alps that he's sharing with us here and we're lucky enough to be the first publication to see them. [www.stefan-hefe.de](http://www.stefan-hefe.de)

**F**OR ME HIKING and photographing in the mountains is an extraordinary experience. It was early summer, but within a few hours – as we moved from the open plains to the cooler, more dramatic mountain peaks – it was like we were back in winter. With different micro climates the mountains and valleys are interesting places to be, with unpredictable weather, which can be very exciting. But it also means it can take extreme effort to reach a location, effort that's not reflected in the finished photos." Aside from the obvious physical demands of climbing and working in high altitudes, Stefan says days were long and nights were short. "The alarm goes off at 4am and I'm either already on the mountain or I still have to climb a few hundred metres. As soon as I can, I shoot until the sun is too high. Then I descend and drive to the next location, with the aim of being up a mountain before sunset to shoot throughout the golden and blue hour, and even by moonlight."

Stefan designed his trip to cover different geographical parts of the Alps, concentrating on four main areas: The forests of Tirol in Austria, the well-known Dolomites in Italy, the wilderness of the Engadin in Switzerland and the French Alps. A lot of time was spent preparing, mostly finding locations and hiking trails in inaccessible areas, but also taking into account sun positions, moon phases and potential weather conditions in the different regions. A schedule was made, but decisions like whether bivouacking was safe (sleeping under the starry sky, often without any shelter) or if he needed to descend from the mountains at night was often ad hoc, as anyone who can imagine an impromptu thunderstorm at high altitude will understand. "While the preparatory work was most important, a healthy gut instinct and a little assistance from above is what keeps you alive," adds Stefan. "As does

**Top:** This is a four stitch vertical panorama of Lac des Beraudes.  
**Right:** This Swiss spot looked like a paradise at sunset.  
**Middle:** We were stuck in this huge thunderstorm 2,500m up – I feared for my life, but the light was amazing.  
**Farright:** The last haze of light along the French/Italian border.



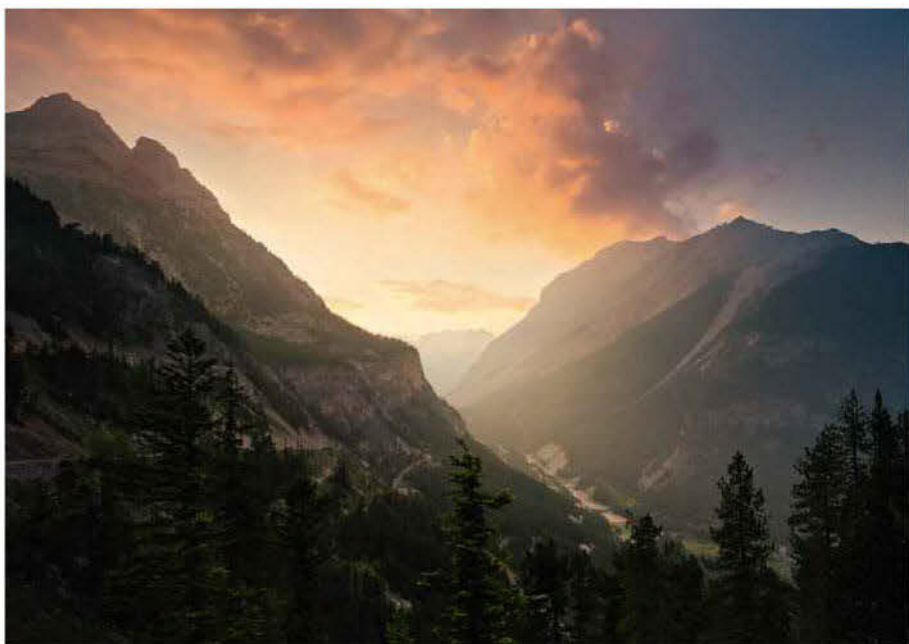
**“THE ALARM GOES OFF AT 4AM AND I’M EITHER ALREADY ON THE MOUNTAIN OR I STILL HAVE TO CLIMB A FEW HUNDRED METRES”**

having a buddy to rely on, which for this trip was my friend Felix Roser."

For a well-planned expedition, there was no accounting for the spontaneous spots of natural beauty and the extreme weather conditions Stefan would face, which, with it, brought the epic light that enabled him to capture such mystical landscapes. "The trip surpassed my expectations. The conditions meant I could take even more photographs. There was a little lake called Lac des Beraudes in the French Alps that I hadn't considered, but made a spontaneous decision to make the 500m vertical hike to in the hot midday sun. ➡











## IN THE BAG...

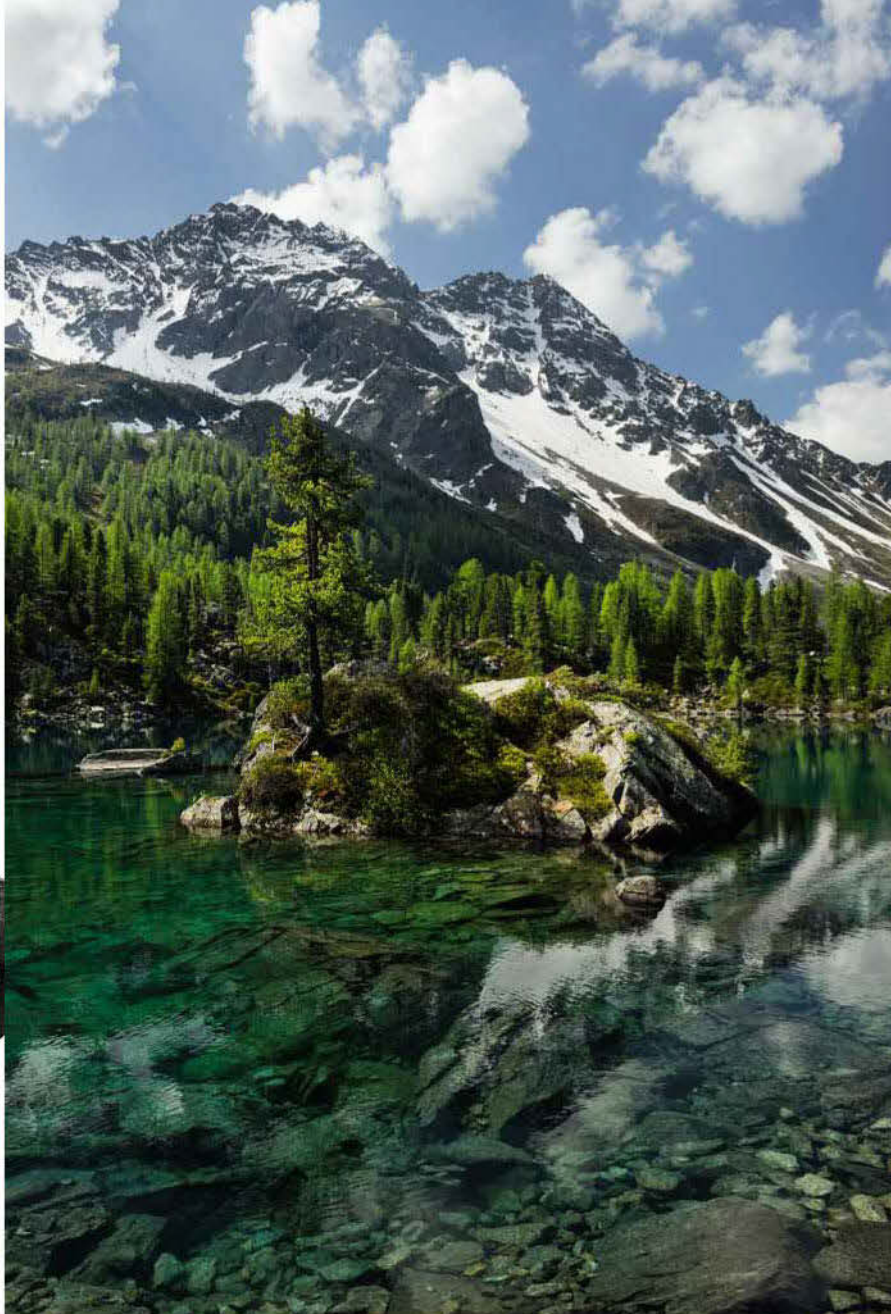
Since 2007, Stefan has only used Nikon and now he has a D800E, D800 and a D810 in the pipeline. For his Alpine adventure he relied on his back-up camera, the D800, a model he says he appreciates very much as it means no compromises on resolution and dynamic range, as well as being more portable than a medium-format camera. With him he took a NIKKOR AF-S 14-24mm f/2.8, 24-70mm f/2.8 and 70-200mm f/2.8 for their exceptional detail and amazing edge-to-edge sharpness.



It showed me beautiful flowering meadows and the lake looked like it was still in the Ice Age. What an unforgettable and unimaginable experience!"

Among other unexpected blessings, the Tree Cime di Lavaredo – the distinctive three peak mountain within Italy's Dolomite mountain range – was covered in snow creating atmospheric fog over nearby lakes at sunset. But it was the Graubuenden, in Switzerland, that was a real highlight: "It was an unscheduled stopover that was worth its weight in gold. We bivouacked at a little mountain lake, which had the clearest turquoise water I'd ever seen and stunning mountain views beyond". Stefan spent his last four days in the mountainous Hautes-Alpes, known for its incredible light and thunderstorms: "One time we got stuck in an open plain 2,500m high during a thunder and hail storm, with no shelter," says Stefan. "There was no escaping, but the dark, sombre mood made perfect pictures."

Stefan's not only a professional landscape photographer, he's a seasoned advertising and architectural photographer. He started without any idea about photography and



## “PHOTOGRAPHING MOUNTAINS TAKES PATIENCE, AS WELL AS TENACITY, TO KEEP FINDING BETTER LIGHT AND THROUGH THAT, BETTER PICTURES”

how to use photography equipment, gaining basic knowledge from an apprenticeship, which has developed into what you see here. "My experience as an architectural photographer has helped me to understand colours, shapes and lines – all absolutely necessary for landscape photography.

"When I'm photographing landscapes, I'm looking for three things: light, composition and subject. Light is always the most important element to catch for a unique atmosphere; good composition and subject make an eye-catching photo but the right light can make an average location look outstanding. I prefer to shoot around dusk and dawn, when the landscape is bathed in mystical light; moonlight is also very effective for atmospheric shots. To get the whole dynamic range in one frame, I use graduated ND filters and if that's not enough I often take two or more different exposures

**Top left:** I discovered this spot within a gloomy forest in the French Alps – it seemed mystical to me. I shot it at 1/6sec and f/13. **Above:** The water was incredibly clear in this Swiss landscape. **Right:** This was a great morning in France. I didn't expect much as there was a lot of humidity, but when the sun started to rise the sky was transformed.

and manually blend them in Photoshop. It took me several years to really understand light and how it is in constant flux. The more you understand the process the better equipped you are for capturing special images with strong compositions. For all of the scenes I shoot, I try to look at them in three layers: foreground, middle-ground and background to make sure each is strong and pulls the viewer in to the picture," explains Stefan. "Photographing mountains takes patience, as well as tenacity, to keep finding better light and through that, better pictures. Perhaps the most important thing of all is to have fun with what you're doing."







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*The Raw Challenge*

# RAW TALENT

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**ONE FILE. A MYRIAD OF POTENTIAL**

IF YOU WERE TO BE PRIVY TO A PROFESSIONAL'S PORTFOLIO OF UNEDITED RAW FILES, YOU MIGHT BE INSPIRED AND RELIEVED TO SEE THE DIFFERENCE EDITING CAN HAVE. WE GIVE YOU THE CHANCE TO SEE HOW THREE VERY DIFFERENT PHOTOGRAPHERS APPROACH HANDLING THE EXACT SAME RAW FILE





## RAW CHALLENGE 1: CAROLINE SCHMIDT

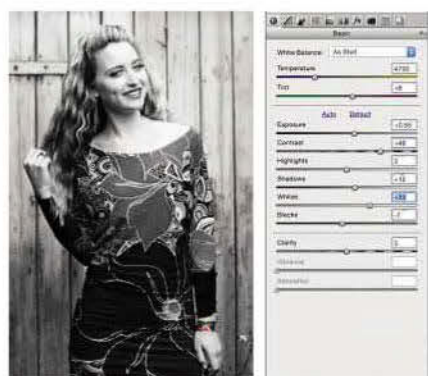
STRONG COLOURFUL CLOTHES CAN OFTEN DISTRACT FROM A SUBJECT'S FACE BUT A MONO CONVERSION CAN FIX THIS

SUCH A VIBRANT portrait might call for some colour treatment, but take the colour away and there's also an expansive tonal range with strong separation between the subject and background. It's a good candidate for a black & white conversion. You might think me crazy to strip such a strong image of its rainbow colour, but sometimes a busy, graphic image can look better black & white.

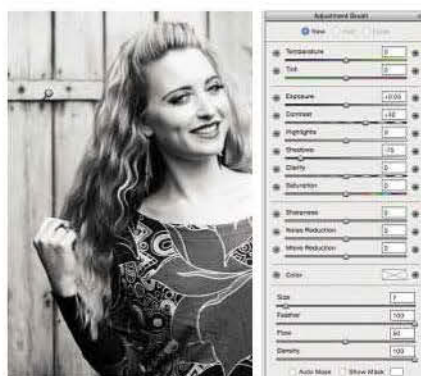
When importing images into Lightroom for shortlisting, I'll often use its B&W Presets to preview what an image might look like

converted to monochrome at varying contrast levels – it gives a good indication of what I can do to them in Photoshop.

While you can just as easily use Lightroom's tools to develop your black & whites, I prefer Photoshop ACR for some mono conversions or for files I know will need more work later. There's always a thousand ways to work in Adobe software, and you can do all your Raw editing in Lightroom – especially if you've presets and actions to make workflow faster – but this is my preferred method.



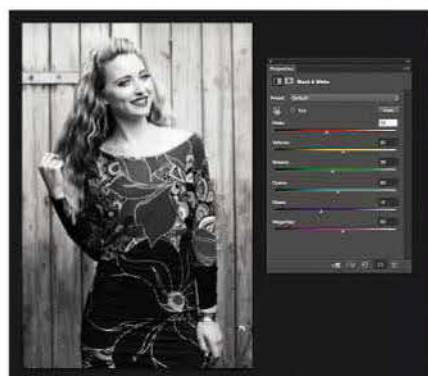
**1 CREATE A BASE EXPOSURE** Opening the portrait in ACR, my first step is to click **Auto** under the **Basic** tab to see how it compares to the original exposure. The in-camera exposure is quite atmospheric, so a blanket automatic adjustment brightens the mid-tones and evens out the histogram, but weakens the style of lighting used when the shot was taken. I increase the **Contrast** slider and then brighten the **Whites** and darken the shadows with the **Black** slider.



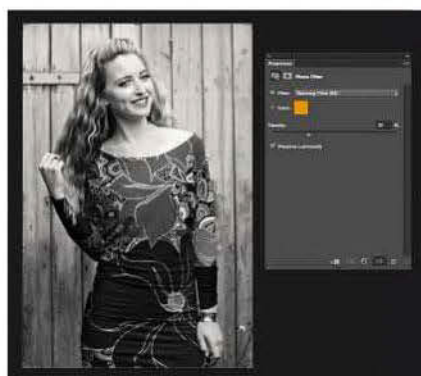
**2 EDIT THE BACKGROUND** One reason this image looked like a good candidate for black & white was the texture of the wood. Editing the contrast to brighten or darken mid-tones is best done in Raw as it's nondestructive and less fiddly than using layer masks in Photoshop. I click on the **HSL/Grayscale** tab and **Convert to Grayscale** to preview the image in black & white. I then use the **Adjustment Brush**, adjusting the brush size and settings to reveal detail in the wood.



**3 SHARPEN AND OPEN** Before opening in Photoshop, I click the **Sharpen** tab and zoom into the model's eye at 100%. It's slightly soft, so I increase the **Radius** to 1.4 and the **Amount** to 66, watching out for symptoms of oversharpening, like artefacts. I untick **Convert to Grayscale** before I click **Open** to make further edits in Photoshop. If I convert in ACR, I'll export in Gray Gamma, not Adobe RGB, which contains the colour information I need for the best conversion.



**4 TURN BLACK & WHITE** One of the best ways to convert to monochrome and to manipulate colours is using a Black & White adjustment layer, which allows you to tweak the tone based on specific colour channels. I quite like the look of the image as a black & white, so I only make a few tweaks to reduce the **Red** channel to dim her red lips and dress, increase **Yellow** to brighten her blonde hair and skin and decrease **Blue** to darken the blue paint on the wooden door.



**5 ADD WARMTH** A high-contrast black & white can look stark, which suits certain subjects, but for portraits I prefer a warmer tone. While you can duo or monotone an image, subtle effects tend to look more natural. For this image, I apply a **Photo Filter** adjustment layer (**Layer>New Adjustment layer**) and select **Warming Filter** from the drop-down menu. I leave the **Density** at 30% but control the effect by varying the layer's **Opacity**: 5-10% does the trick.



**6 FINAL TOUCHES** To add a subtle but bright haze to the top of the image, I add a **Gradient Fill** adjustment layer selecting **Foreground to Background** and **White** as the colour, tweaking the **Radius** for the best angle. I repeat using **Black** as the colour, angled at the bottom of the frame, for a vignette. I adjust both layers' **Opacity** to get the effect that looks best, and finish the shot off with a slight increase in highlights using a **Curves** adjustment layer.





**CAROLINE'S FINAL RAW EDIT**

Concentrating on getting the most detail from the colour information in a black & white often gives great results.



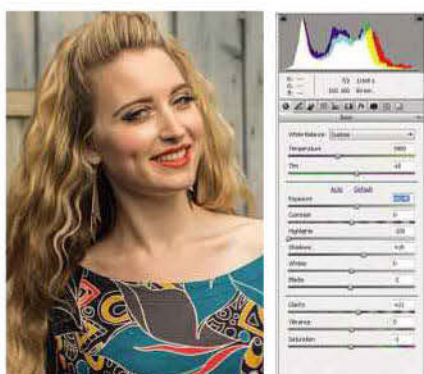


## RAW CHALLENGE 2: PAUL WARD

PRO COMMERCIAL PHOTOGRAPHER PAUL WARD TALKS YOU THROUGH HIS PROCESS FOR EDITING COLOURFUL PORTRAITS

EVEN THOUGH I always aim to capture a shot as close to perfect as I can in-camera, knowing that you can tweak the highlights or push up the shadows is a comforting fail safe, especially when you're shooting for clients, but the biggest benefit for me is the White Balance adjustment. White Balance is easy to misjudge in mixed lighting and shooting Raw means you can rely on the flexibility it offers when editing. It is possible to adjust the colours on a JPEG file but it doesn't look that accurate and can degrade the image slightly if used too heavily.

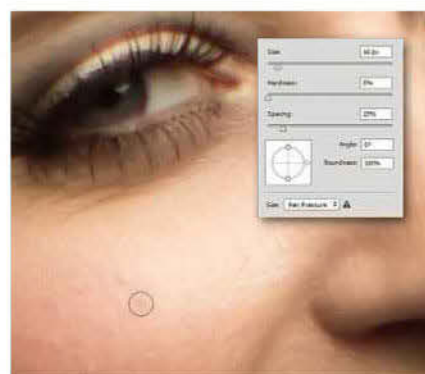
When I first opened this Raw file, I was instantly struck by how blue the tones were, and not surprising as it was shot at a White Balance of 4700K. Because of the model's blonde hair and the rustic looking door, I thought that it might look even better with a brighter and warmer finish. As it's outdoors I knew that my custom lens flares might work well too and add to the 'summery' effect. I always spend a fair amount of time covering blemishes, removing hairs and brightening skin, although this model's skin is beautifully even already.



**1 CHANGE THE WHITE BALANCE** To add warmth to the image, I set a custom White Balance by moving the **Temperature** slider to a higher value, giving the image a golden look. I then drag the **Highlights** slider to **-100** to recover all overexposed areas in the image, and push **Shadows** and **Clarity** up slightly to boost the contrast and sharpness. Before opening the Raw file in Photoshop, I also adjust the noise reduction sliders to get rid of the little grain in the image.



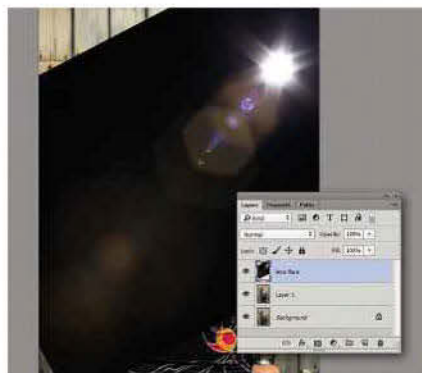
**2 USE FREQUENCY SEPARATION** In Photoshop, I start to work on retouching the skin using a technique that's called Frequency Separation. It's quite an advanced retouching process but highly effective. It uses multiple layers, blending modes and blurring/sharpening techniques to smooth skin and remove blemishes, while retaining texture and detail. (Read issue 81, August 2013, for a detailed tutorial explaining how to master this pro retouching technique.)



**3 RETOUCH THE SKIN** After the skin's been polished, I switch between using the **Healing Brush tool** and the **Clone Stamp tool** – using a fairly small, soft-edged brush for both – to tidy up the skin, to cover any blemishes and remove stray hairs. I tend to find zooming into areas of the skin as much as 300% makes it easier to refine the tiny details, like pores and to remove small hairs along the hairline, which on a wider view can create a cleaner finish.



**4 INCREASE SATURATION** I duplicate the Background layer by dragging the layer down to the **New Layer** icon at the bottom of the Layers palette. At the top of the Layers palette, I change the new image layer's **Blend Mode** to **Overlay** using the drop-down menu to boost the contrast and increase the saturation. At 100% opacity the Overlay layer is overpowering, so I make the image slightly opaque by reducing the layer's **Opacity** slider to 50%.



**5 ADD LENS FLARE** I shot lens flare using a large black piece of cardboard with a 1cm hole. I put a flash behind the hole and took shots of the card using an M42 fit lens. I added it to a black canvas in Photoshop so that I can have quick access to a wide range of lens flare styles. When I want to add lens flare to an image to enhance its 'summery' feel, I copy and paste the image on to a new layer and rotate it using the **Transform tools** to the desired angle.



**6 BLEND IN THE LENS FLARE** With the lens flare layer in position, I change the layer's **Blend Mode** from **Normal** to **Screen**, which removes the black leaving only the lens flare visible. I use the **Eraser tool** with a large, soft brush to work over the image removing any hard edges that may still be visible where I've rotated the lens flare layer. Next, I flatten the layers (**Layers>Flatten Image**) and save the file as a TIFF (to retain the layers) and a JPEG. Hey presto!



PAUL'S FINAL RAW EDIT

Aspot of sharpening and I'm done  
- the cool background complements  
the model's skin tones nicely.







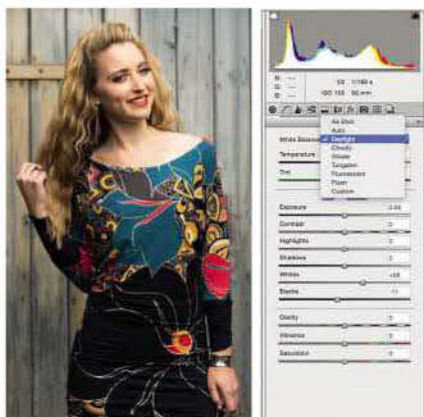
## RAW CHALLENGE 3: JORDAN BUTTERS

FOR RETOUCHING PORTRAITS AND WORKING SELECTIVELY, JORDAN PREFERS THE EDITING POWER OF PHOTOSHOP CC

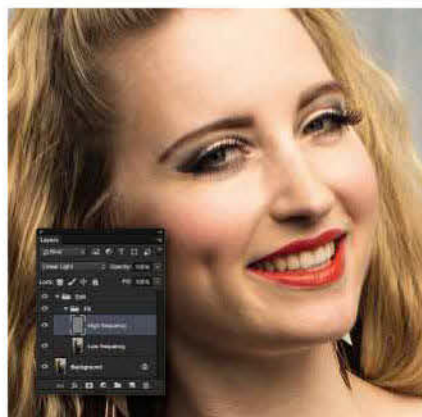
I'D CONSIDER PORTRAITS to be some of the trickiest types of photographs to retouch and edit. Why? I think it may be because we're so used to seeing people's faces in photographs that any instance in which someone's skin is a bit too smooth, or their eyes brightened just a smidgen too much, seems to stand out like a sore thumb. For this reason alone when retouching portraits, I'll often finish my edit before powering down the computer, but then revisit the picture the following day – a fresh set of eyes can often give you a new

perspective on whether you've got it just right, or over-egged it.

This is a really nice portrait with great lighting, but there's a lot going on. The model's dress is quite busy and the background, although photogenic, is competing for attention. The model's skin looks pretty good straight out of camera, so I'll most likely be focusing my time in Photoshop CC on making the colours in the image work well together and adjusting exposure selectively to allow the model to really stand out against her surroundings.



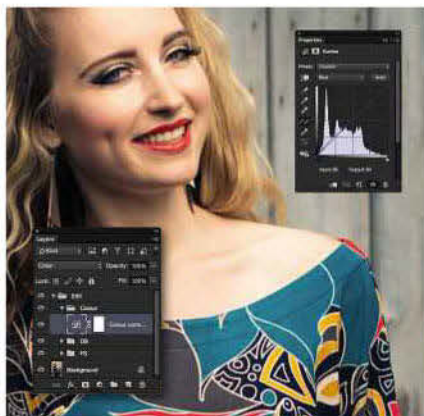
**1 RAW ADJUSTMENTS** I'll be doing most of my adjustments within Photoshop CC, but there are some which are best done in Adobe Camera Raw first. I'm guessing the image was shot using natural light, or flash with a similar colour temperature. I set the **White Balance** to **Daylight** before applying profile **Lens Corrections**, which removes any vignette and distortion.



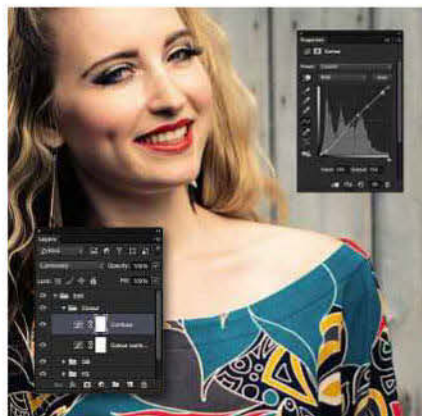
**2 FREQUENCY SEPARATION** The model here has good skin, but I always start portrait retouching with a spot of frequency separation. I have an action set up for this in Photoshop so it's a one-click step. I use the **Clone Stamp tool** on the low frequency layer to smooth out the skin tones and then the **Patch tool** on the high frequency layer to remove blemishes and lines.



**3 DODGE AND BURN** Next, I add two new layers, both set to **Soft Light** and filled with **50% grey**. On one layer I use the **Dodge tool** to brighten the eyes and remove some shadows. On the other layer I use the **Burn tool** to add a vignette to the background. Upon initial review I've overdone the dodging, but turning down the **Opacity** on this layer easily solves this problem.



**4 ADJUST COLOUR** Next, I concentrate on colour. I create a new **Curves** adjustment layer and set its **Blend Mode** to **Color**. In the **Blue** channel I add blue to the shadows before adding an anchor point to the mid-tones to prevent the highlights from taking on a yellow tint. I switch to the **Red** channel, anchor the mid-tones again and remove red from the shadows, which adds a teal tint.



**5 ADD CONTRAST** Adding another **Curves** adjustment layer with the **Blend Mode** set to **Luminosity** allows me to adjust the contrast without affecting colour. I create an S-curve, adding contrast, however this makes the skin too bright. Using the **Targeted Adjustment tool** I am able to concentrate on the skin tones and reduce the brightness, without sacrificing contrast.



**6 TWEAK BACKGROUND** The background is distracting for me. I add a **Solid Color** adjustment layer, choosing a teal tone, before changing the **Blend Mode** to **Soft Light**. I then mask this effect, so that it only affects the background. The backdrop is slightly too bright however, so I add an **Exposure** adjustment layer and reduce the brightness using the same mask.



**JORDAN'S FINAL RAW EDIT**

A spot of sharpening and my edit is complete!  
The changes I have made make the model  
really stand out against the background.





*The* Big Interview

# THE GREATEST SHOW *on* EARTH

ROLL UP ROLL UP! COME LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, BOYS AND GIRLS, TAKE A PEW AND SETTLE DOWN FOR A TALE OF CLOWNS, CRYSTAL BALLS & MEMORY CARDS, AS RINGMASTER DANIEL LEZANO CRACKS HIS WHIP AT PORTRAIT PRO BRETT HARKNESS AND REVEALS THE MYSTERY OF THE LOST CARNIVAL...

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Words: DANIEL LEZANO

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I'M NOT SURE about you, but I've never felt the same way about clowns since encountering Tim Curry's portrayal of Pennywise in Stephen King's *IT*! Since then, a shiver tingles down my spine whenever I'm faced by those face-painted loonies of the circus world. While I can't say they still don't make me uncomfortable, I have to admit my view of them has warmed a little since viewing the latest personal project of professional photographer Brett Harkness. A regular contributor of portrait and lighting tutorials to the magazine, his expertise in the craft is clear to see in these images, although the subject matter is a little different to what we're used to from him. Who are this motley crew and what brought Brett into their weird world of big tents, bearded women and creepy clowns?









“**T**HIS GROUP OF characters, known as The Lost Carnival, aren’t circus folk, they’re actors – including the clown,” Brett reveals. “The cast are from all around Europe and are the creation of Wild Rumpus, an outdoor events management team based in Cheshire. I was looking for a fresh personal portrait project and so I contacted them and we met for coffee to talk over my plans. I explained the type of flash-lit portraits I wanted to capture and, as they’d never been photographed this way, they were happy to allow me to shoot the carnival at its venue near Bury.

“The event took place over a weekend, with rehearsals on the Friday, so I headed over on rehearsal day to do the majority of the portraits, as I knew the weekend would be more difficult due to the general public being in attendance. The Lost Carnival is a major show that reenacts a 19th Century carnival. The general public are treated to a live story that takes place all around them and lasts the whole day. Every hour a big gong is sounded, weird music plays and the

carnival crew gather on stage to reveal the next part of a story. It’s all done on a grand stage – at one point the story talks about a woman lost in Russia trying to make her way back to the UK, at the next gong a steam train rolls up by the side of the stage (which is built by a railway track) and the lost lady jumps off the train to continue telling the story. The end is very spectacular, but I won’t spoil it for you – if you want to know, you’ll have to attend the next show! It’s all very involved, slickly produced and captivating for the crowds.”

The Lost Carnival clearly has the makings for some great images, but Brett’s vision was for something very different from what the public would try to capture. “My aim was to produce a strong set of environmental portraits with a wide range of characters captured within their surroundings, rather than take a documentary-style series, which is what I’d normally be looking to do. It took the pressure off me a little as I could concentrate on capturing a specific style of image, rather than running around with two sets of cameras and lighting kit trying to do

1) “The Pentax 25mm lens was ideal for this group shot, with a 6ft Octa Lightbank providing the light.” 2) “The map offered an interesting and unusual backdrop.” 3) “I wanted as much reflection as possible in the balls so moved the Octa Lightbank as close as I could.” 4) “The colourful outfits and settings made for fun, quirky portraits.” 5) “Balancing flash and flames isn’t easy – we had to make sure the fireball appeared in the shadow of the tent so as not to lose it in the sky.”

both styles at the same time.” For such a considered approach, it’s no surprise that Brett was wheeling out the big guns in terms of lighting kit. “I wanted beautifully lit portraits, so I took with me a 6ft Elinchrom Octa Lightbank as my main light and a couple of rear lights with gels. The sheer size of the kit meant I had to set up where I wanted the shot to be taken, rather than chase the carnival cast across the fields. I initially set up on one side of the big tent but the sun was too powerful, even for the flash to override it, so I moved to the other side of the tent so the sun was on the back of them, this way the sun was helping the rear light as well as lighting the tent when it was in the frame.” Brett’s choice of digital camera was as equally as heavyweight an option. ➡





“MY AIM WAS TO PRODUCE A STRONG SET OF ENVIRONMENTAL PORTRAITS WITH A WIDE RANGE OF CHARACTERS CAPTURED WITHIN THEIR SURROUNDINGS.”





"I decided I wanted the shoot to be on medium-format as opposed to shooting on my full-frame Canon, so the vast majority of the images were taken on a 51.4-megapixel Pentax 645Z. Shooting on medium-format requires a far more disciplined approach – it makes you feel as though you're producing images again and not just taking snaps. The whole process is slower, it makes you think about everything you're doing and gives you the feeling that you're producing something special. I found I was more focused on what the environment was doing, how the light fell on the subject and the scene, how I should balance the ambient and flash – everything was slower and put together with more care, I felt like I was constructing every image to be as good as possible."

"For every character, we used the Pentax with the Octa Lightbank to shoot the main portraits, then followed this by taking them off somewhere nearby to capture another image at f/2 to give a very shallow depth-of-field. I used a similar technique and lighting style for everyone as I wanted a cohesiveness to run through the set."

"The clown was the first person I shot. It was funny because at the start he was just being a clown. But in the mid-19th Century clowns were quite serious so I asked him not to be happy for a minute or two as I wanted a more sombre image. He really got into character and the resulting picture is one of my favourites from the whole set."

"The lighting style of the clown image set the tone for those to follow. I wanted to cut down the ambient light but not override it,

1) "I love the way the light catches the ringmaster's trousers and boots. I slightly solarised the sky for a surreal look." 2) "I went in close with the 55mm and focused on the eyes." 3) "I added a warm tone in post-production to give this image an aged look." 4) "This clown image was one of the first shots of the day. I went for delicate lighting and I love the mood here – it epitomises what I was trying to achieve on this shoot."

so I set up the Octa and had him face it, then used a wide aperture to isolate him from the background but have it prominent enough to form a strong part of the scene."

I stop Brett for a moment and ask him to explain his lighting technique a little more – it's a key part of his successful style, so a little more detail on how he formulates it is gold dust for those wishing to attempt at recreating something similar.

"First of all, it's vital to get the position and power of the main light source right. I wanted to retain shadow in the shot and so I placed the Octa Lightbank at 45° to the subject and had him face towards the light. I was using an Indirect Octa, which reverses the light passing through it to provide a beautifully soft light that wraps around the subject. The distance of the main light to the subject is paramount and that is determined by my choice of aperture. I used a three-stop ND filter to reduce the ambient light level. One of the things about the Pentax is that it's top flash sync speed is limited to 1/125sec, so the ND helped me achieve the balance I needed. When I first started using flash it was all about the big power, dramatic skies and underexposed ambient light, which clients still like so I do it. However for my personal work, I try to make my flash give a

## WHY USE THE PENTAX 645Z?

"I've tried a medium-format Phase One outfit before and it delivered amazing images. When Pentax released the 645Z system I was asked if I wanted to give it a test drive; I did and was blown away by it. Although it's medium-format, you can use it in much the same way as a 35mm system, but the image quality is far superior. It's larger than 35mm but not by much so it handles really well. You do have to work slower with it but that's a real benefit. It's almost like you've loaded it with a roll of film and you don't want to waste a frame. It slows you down, makes you look at the screen to check the lighting, histogram and so on and ensure the next shot is perfect. I only shot 500 frames over two days, which is crazy, I'd shoot that on the morning of a wedding alone with my Canon. It costs less than other medium-format kits and quality is comparable if not better – I can see it becoming very popular with pros and enthusiasts alike."







more gentle effect – it's still obvious but I'm balancing it a lot more with the ambient."

The lighting is key to the images, but the characters themselves played a vital role. "I stressed to all the cast how important it was that they got into character – the success of the portraits rested on them believing in their carnival character and, as they were all such good actors, they did that naturally. I rarely show images to subjects but I did here and I'm glad I did. The clown loved his portraits and once we'd finished, he went into the big tent and told the others, so they were all really excited and motivated when it was their turn, making everything work so much better."

The pictures are a departure from Brett's day job, but like other personal projects I've seen of his, ranging from a trip to India to a visit to the local zoo, he has an enviable

## THE CLOWN WAS THE FIRST PERSON I SHOT. HE REALLY GOT INTO CHARACTER AND THE RESULTING IMAGE IS ONE OF MY FAVOURITES

knack for delivering something special.

"I'm known as a social and wedding photographer and that's obviously very important to my business, but as a creative person, I'm trying to get back to what enthused me about photography in the first place – shooting portraits – and finding new scenarios, techniques and styles that reveal a different side of my vision. As a kid I used to visit the likes of butchers, undertakers

and all sorts and spend a day or two with them capturing them in their environment. It's important to take time away from work to rediscover your enthusiasm for taking pictures and I'm slowly building up a cohesive set of shoots based around this style. This is my real love and I hope the future holds more of this type of work as I'd love to build a successful side of the business producing these types of images. I can't wait for the day when I'm hired to do a job like this – I work best under pressure and know I'd do it twice as well."

I tell you what, you don't need Claire Voyant and her crystal ball to know that if that's what Brett wishes his future path to take him, he's going to make a success of it. For more on Brett Harkness visit: [www.brettharknessphotography.com](http://www.brettharknessphotography.com)



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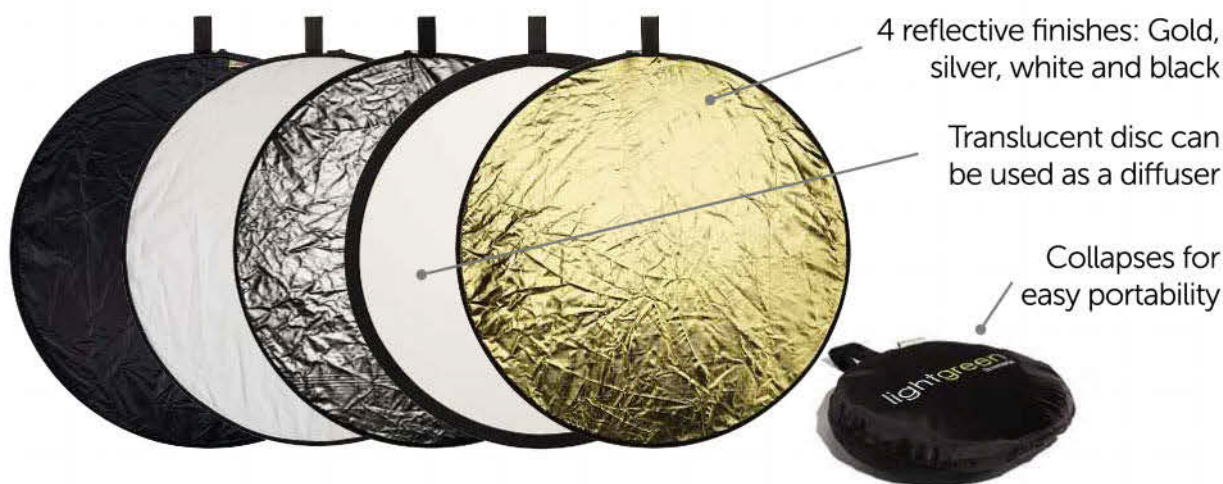


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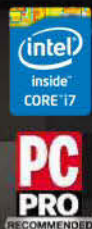
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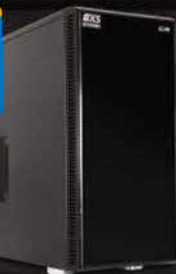
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## Iceland Falls

Hasselblad H5-50,  
35mm f3.5 Lens, f22,  
2 seconds, ISO50 with flash

Filter used:  
0.9 ND Standard

Teamwork and planning are at the heart of every picture I make. I consider my equipment to be as crucial a part of my team as my assistants, and LEE Filters play a role that's every bit as vital as my camera and lighting.

My 'Fashionscape' project requires conditions that are as dramatic as the locations. On this occasion, we were shooting in Iceland, and had battled with the weather for more than a week. In a situation such as this, once the right moment finally comes along, you can't afford for your equipment to let you down.

This scene required an exposure of two full seconds. In order to protect my camera lens from the constant spray, I fitted a LEE Neutral Density standard filter to it. As my model held her pose amid all this chaos, the flash helped to freeze the moment and keep her sharp. The LEE 0.9 Neutral Density filter allowed me to achieve the two-second exposure, which was long enough to capture the dynamism and flow of the waterfall. Without it, this shot wouldn't have been possible.



*Karl Taylor*

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# Gear

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## CANON EOS 750D

IT'S APPEALING ON PAPER, BUT HOW DOES THE FEATURE-PACKED EOS 750D PERFORM WHEN IT'S PUT TO THE TEST? SEE HOW WE RATE CANON'S LATEST ENTRY-LEVEL DSLR



### *Plus*

**GEAR NEWS:** Our round-up of the latest and greatest product and gear announcements *Page 102*

**ND GRADS TESTED:** We compare ND grad filter systems from five major manufacturers *Page 108*

**SIGMA PREMIUM TELEZOOM:** The powerful Sigma 150-600mm f/5-6.3 is reviewed and rated *Page 114*



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## LUMIX GX8 RELEASED

PANASONIC'S EXTENSIVE LUMIX series boasts several popular 16-megapixel CSC models, so the GX8 is something of a Micro Four-Thirds evolution, increasing the resolution to 20.3-million pixels. Priced at £1,069 body only (£1,800 with 12-35mm f/2.8 lens), the jump in pixel count does come at a steep price, but the GX8 also boasts an improved VENUS Engine processor for less noise, a tilting 2,360,000-dot electronic viewfinder and 4K video capture. It's also the first Lumix with Dual Image Stabilisation that combines a Lens Optical Image Stabiliser and Body Image Stabiliser to help minimise shake. The bold retro design looks great and the body benefits from dust and splash proofing, as well as a 3in, 1,040,000-dot tilting touchscreen monitor. Other features include an ISO range of 200-25600 and an updated AF response that boasts significant speed improvements over previous models.

Panasonic also revealed it is planning to launch a Leica DG 100-400mm f/4-6.3 (35mm equivalent: 200-800mm) and a Lumix G 25mm f/1.7 lens, although no date or price has yet been confirmed. [www.panasonic.co.uk](http://www.panasonic.co.uk)

## GET CLOSER

IF YOU'RE A FAN of close-ups then you'll be pleased to hear that Samyang has unveiled a new macro lens with a 1:1 (life-size) magnification ratio and comfortable 30.7cm working distance. The new Samyang 100mm f/2.8 ED UMC MACRO is a manual focus lens, not that this will concern many dedicated close-up enthusiasts, and offers great value for money, priced at just £420 in Nikon fitting and £390 in Canon, Sony A, Sony E, Pentax, Fuji X and MFT mounts. [www.syopt.com/en](http://www.syopt.com/en)



## A fresh set of legs

VELBON HAS BEEN busy over the past few months, and has unleashed a variety of new tripods all in one go! There are four new models added to the popular Ultra range – the £100 Ultra 355 is a lightweight photo and video tripod with three-way head, while the £90 Ultra 353 Mini-Q is a miniscule ball-and-socket model aimed at macro, travel and tabletop work. Velbon has also added the £120 Ultra 455 tripod with PH-G40D pan head as a mid-duty travel tripod, and the new £100 Ultra 655 model, which is supplied legs-only and caters for more heavy-duty work.

Also announced was a new three-in-one model, the SUB-65. This four-section tripod can be extended up to 161cm and includes a pan head. There's a removable centre column that forms its own monopod and also included is a Hide-Clamp II, allowing the centre column to be table- or ledge-mounted. The SUB-65 is available now, priced at £140. [www.velbon.co.uk](http://www.velbon.co.uk)



## COKIN NUANCES

COKIN HAS INTRODUCED a completely new range of filters – Cokin NUANCES. The new mineral glass filters are coated with a nano metallic alloy using a newly-developed coating process. Cokin claim that multiple NDs can be stacked with no noticeable shift in colour. Available in six different densities up to ten-stop, the Cokin NUANCES fit Cokin's range of filter holders as well as other 100mm systems. Prices are yet to be confirmed. [www.cokin.co.uk](http://www.cokin.co.uk)



## TAMRAC'S BACK!

POPULAR CAMERA BAG manufacturer Tamrac has refreshed its whole product range, focused on better quality and even better value. The first products to be announced are the Anvil range of backpacks. Available in three standard sizes, two slim and a telephoto lens bag, the Anvil range is 30% lighter than its outgoing Expedition range. The bags feature the usual configurable interiors and all accept a 15in laptop too, plus features an innovative waist belt that can be removed and used independently as a utility belt, alongside Tamrac's new range of Arc cases. The Anvil range starts from £200 for the Anvil 11 and is available now. Details on more new products later in the year. [www.tamrac.co.uk](http://www.tamrac.co.uk)





# Top trio from Nikon

NIKON HAS REVEALED three additions to its lens range that offer significant size and weight advantages. The £870 NIKKOR DX 16-80mm f/2.8-4 (1) weighs only 480g, despite its relatively fast aperture, making it a potentially popular choice with travel photographers. This 5x zoom also boasts an advanced optical design, Vibration Reduction and weather protection, making it a solid upgrade from your standard kit zoom if you can afford it.

Nikon's latest super-telephotos, the AF-S NIKKOR 600mm f/4E FL ED VR (2) and AF-S NIKKOR 500mm f/4E FL ED VR (3) offer a significant weight reduction of 20% and 25% respectively over their predecessors. Both lenses have all-new optical designs that employ lightweight fluorite glass elements, as well as Nano Crystal Coat and ED glass. This is made possible with the use of fluorite elements and the inclusion of magnesium-alloy in its construction. Further improvements and innovations include an electromagnetic diaphragm for consistent, more precise exposures during high-speed bursts and the latest Vibration Reduction, which claims a four-stop advantage. Both lenses feature Nikon's fluorine coating, which actively repels water, dust and dirt. The final weight-saving these lenses will offer is on your wallet/purse – the 600mm f/4E will alleviate you of £9,650, or £8,150 for the 500mm f/4E.

[www.nikon.co.uk](http://www.nikon.co.uk)



## NEW FILTERS FROM TOKINA

TOKINA HAS RELEASED a range of innovative water-repellant filters featuring a special hydrophilic coating. Prices for the Tokina Hydrophilic range start at £300 and it's available in 77mm to 127mm screw-in filters, or 100mm for square slot-in types. A photocatalyst layer within recharges the coating when you expose the filter to a UV lamp for four hours, or direct sunlight for eight hours. We've seen it in action and the results are impressive – the filter completely repels water, leaving no signs of beading whatsoever! Also new from Tokina is a range of PRO IRND filters. Available in a variety of densities and sizes, and in square and rectangular drop-in fittings, the new filters control rather than cut the infrared wavelength, resulting in glass that is free from any colour cast. Prices start from £130. [www.tokinacinema.co.uk](http://www.tokinacinema.co.uk)



## Manfrotto's up in arms!

MANFROTTO HAS LAUNCHED the Friction Arms Range, aimed at professional and advanced enthusiast photographers and videographers. The four friction arms are available in 15cm and 24cm sizes and feature an anti-rotation system, which keeps equipment securely interlocked. Prices start at £65.

Also announced is the £130 Off Road 20L Hiker backpack, which can hold a mid-sized DSLR with lens and accessories and is available in grey/green or red/blue colour choices. Side-access allows you to reach your camera kit quickly and easily, while the Manfrotto Protection System ensures it's all kept safe from damage. The internal divider can be removed should you wish to use the backpack purely for personal items and a breathable back system and thick adjustable shoulder straps promise excellent comfort when in use. [www.manfrotto.co.uk](http://www.manfrotto.co.uk)



## STRAPYOURSELF IN

AMERICAN BRAND OP/TECH has released some strapping new products. Pro and enthusiast DSLR users might be tempted by the Utility Camera Sling-Duo, which allows for two DSLRs to be worn in a sling style. And mirrorless fans needn't feel left out, as Mirrorless Camera Sling and Mirrorless Camera Strap options cater for smaller, more lightweight outfits. The Utility Camera Sling-Duo is priced at £37, with the Mirrorless Sling and Strap retailing for £22 and £18, respectively. [www.optechusa.co.uk](http://www.optechusa.co.uk)



# CANON EOS 750D

Canon's new entry-level APS-C model is a superb all-round camera with high-specs and connectivity, and is released alongside a near-twin

Test: JORDAN BUTTERS

## SPECIFICATIONS

Price: body only £600 (guide price) / £530 (street price)
Image sensor: APS-C CMOS 23.5 x 15.6mm
Resolution: 24.2-megapixels
Maximum image resolution: 6000x4000 pixels
AF points: 19 (all cross-type)
ISO range: 100-25600
Shutter speeds: 1/4000sec-30 seconds & Bulb
Continuous frame rate: 5fps
Built-in flash: Yes. Guide Number 12 (ISO 100, m)
LCD monitor: 3in 1,040,000-dot
Storage: SD (SDHC/SDXC)
Size: 131.9x100.7x77.8mm
Weight: 555g (inc battery and card)

YOU'VE PROBABLY NOTICED by now that cameras at the entry end of the market are updated more frequently than their professional counterparts. Not only are beginners and enthusiasts a lucrative demographic, but the consensus among manufacturers is that the earlier they hook a photographer into investing in their system, the more likely they are to stick with that brand throughout their photographic journey. Canon's approach is no different – updated roughly every two years, these lightweight and compact EOS models are the foundation for many people when it comes to stepping into the world of DSLRs. Boasting an impressive specification, high-resolution sensor, easy-to-use controls and a raft of automatic modes, the new EOS 750D seems like a straightforward choice when it comes to picking your first DSLR. But it's not, and here's why...

Canon isn't doing away with the EOS 750D's predecessor – the EOS 700D – this model is said to remain in the range for the foreseeable future, offering consumers even more choice (and arguably value for money) than before. While most of us expected the launch of the new model earlier this year, what we didn't foresee was that it would arrive alongside a near-identical twin: the EOS 760D. Instant confusion struck – why release two new models that at a glance appear so similar? Reading the specifications, the EOS 750D and 760D are near-identical, it isn't until you get both cameras side-by-side and in hand that the variation becomes clear.

Where the EOS 750D features a single mode dial on the right of the top plate, the EOS 760D wears its mode dial on the left shoulder, making way for an LCD panel on



## SEPARATED AT BIRTH

The EOS 750D is internally identical to the EOS 760D, with a simplified control layout that is more suited to first-time users and novices.

the right, much like Canon's enthusiast and pro DSLRs. There's also a four-way control dial and lockable control wheel on the EOS 760D's rear and the LCD viewfinder displays shooting information, whereas it doesn't on the 750D. That's about it! When deciding between the EOS 750D and 760D it really is a case of trying them both in hand and seeing which feels best for you.

Both cameras pack the same DIGIC 6 image processor and Canon's all-new 24.2-megapixel APS-C CMOS sensor. They offer the same 19-point cross-type AF system (as found in the EOS 70D), you can enjoy identical Hybrid CMOS AF III systems for focusing when shooting video or using LiveView as well as shoot up to five frames-per-second. So, with the exception of ergonomics, this review of the EOS 750D should remain true for the EOS 760D, too.

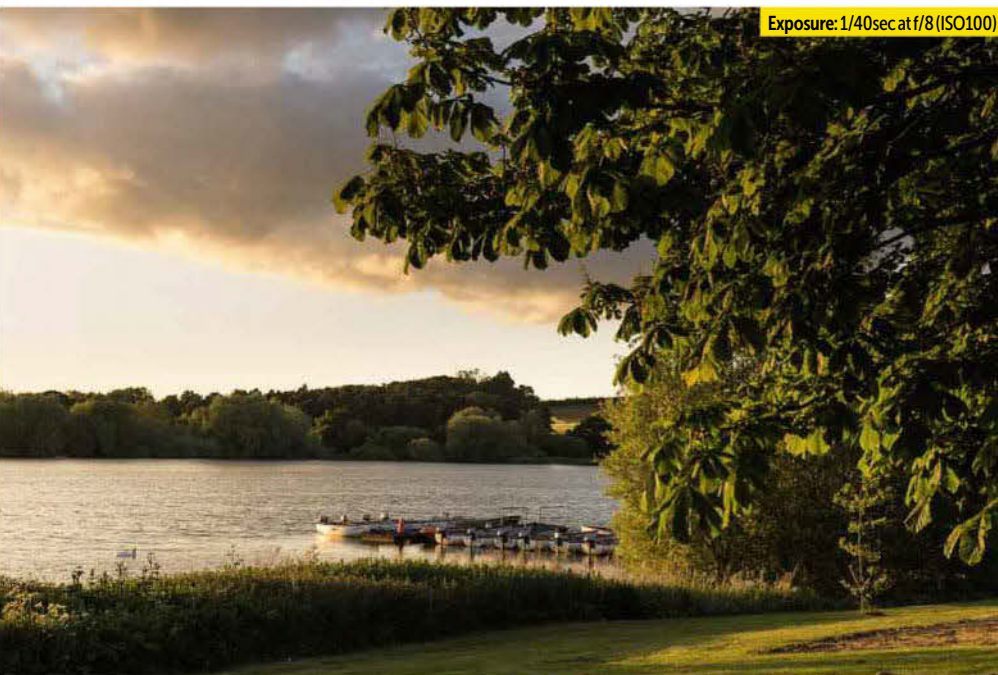
If you've ever used an EOS 700D then the EOS 750D will feel instantly familiar. It's noticeably lightweight – constructed from a hard plastic material – but feels robust, and our review model showed no signs of worrying creaks or movement when put under strain. A single SD card slot is hidden behind a door on the right and the camera now accepts Canon's compact LP-E17 battery as found in the EOS M3. There's a prominent rubber handgrip that offers good purchase on the camera, and the large rear 3in LCD screen articulates for shooting at jaunty angles. It has a touchscreen, too, making selecting AF points incredibly easy when using LiveView.

Canon has certainly packed a lot of small buttons onto the top and rear of the EOS 750D, and as a result its design could never be described as minimalist – something I actually find quite refreshing. It's all very well your camera looking like a sleek work of art, but it's less than ideal if you have to dive through three menus and six sub-menus to change the ISO. As a result, the EOS 750D is very easy to use, and alongside the usual M, Av, Tv and P exposure modes there are several Scene modes to make things even easier for any novice user.

As always, Canon's menu system is easy to navigate. The LCD monitor is bright and the touchscreen feature makes it simple to use for anyone half-proficient in using tablets or smartphones – the usual poke, pinch and swipe gestures pretty much covers it. The EOS 750D features a Touch Shutter option too, allowing you to press the screen to take a picture when in LiveView – this makes switching between focus points quicker than it ever could using the old-fashioned method of manually picking your focus point before half-holding the shutter button and recomposing. The optical viewfinder is bright and clear, but only offers 95% coverage, something to bear in mind when composing tight shots.

The DIGIC 6 processor is an upgrade from the DIGIC 5 unit found in the EOS 700D. It boasts an ISO range of 100-12800 (expandable to 25600). There's a decent buffer size too, allowing for almost 950 JPEG Normal quality files to be rattled off





Exposure: 1/40sec at f/8 (ISO100)



Exposure: 1/100sec at f/8 (ISO 100)

## UNDERSTANDING AUTOFOCUS

The Canon EOS 750D/760D offers two different autofocus systems, depending on how you're using the camera. When using the viewfinder, a traditional 19-point phase-detection AF system uses cross-type sensors to accurately lock on to your subject.

Switch to LiveView or use movie mode and a new Hybrid CMOS AF III system springs into life. This is an improved version of the same system found in the EOS 100D and the same technology found in the EOS M3 – it's quick and accurate, but not quite up to the performance of Canon's Dual Pixel CMOS AF technology found in the EOS 70D.

This is one area where the EOS 750D and 760D do differ slightly: the EOS 750D doesn't offer Servo AF when using LiveView, whereas the 760D does. This means that the EOS 750D won't track a moving subject in LiveView while the shutter is held down, but the 760D will.

## CLOSEST RIVALS

● **CANON EOS 760D:** Separated at birth and shares the same internals as the EOS 750D, with a different control layout. It'll set you back £50 more, but performance is identical.

● **CANON EOS 700D:** Technically an old model, but still offered new and is a very good camera. If you don't need the extra resolution, processing power and connectivity then it's worth a look. Prices have dropped recently and it can be found for around £420 at present.

● **CANON EOS 70D:** Slightly less resolution, but an improvement on almost everything else, the EOS 70D is Canon's enthusiast-level offering. It boasts a fantastic AF system, weather-sealing and Wi-Fi and is available for around £730, body-only.

● **NIKON D5500:** On paper, it matches the EOS 750D. Delivers fantastic image detail thanks to a lack of optical low-pass filter, but much of the decision between Canon and Nikon comes down to preferred handling. Most dealers currently sell it for around £570 body-only.

## VERDICT

If you're looking for your first DSLR, or want to upgrade from an older model, then the EOS 750D is an excellent choice. With a specification that doesn't leave you wanting, a cracking sensor, great AF system and new connectivity options there's not much missing. The biggest conundrum that you face is whether to pip for the EOS 750D or stump up the extra £50 for the EOS 760D – it comes down to personal taste, though, as both are very good cameras.

Handling	18/20
Ease of use	19/20
Features	19/20
Performance	18/20
Value	19/20

**Overall 93/100**

before slowing down. Increase the quality and things quickly drop off; however, I found that the buffer ran out of steam at around 30 JPEG Fine images, clogged up at eight when shooting Raw files and just six when shooting Raw + JPEG together. Having said that, this isn't a sports camera and those numbers won't ever pose a problem for most users.

As you'd expect from a modern digital SLR, the image quality cannot be faulted. The new CMOS sensor delivers beautiful high-resolution images that can be printed bigger than you'd probably ever want. Files from the EOS 750D are crisp, sharp and representative of true colours. The camera utilises a new 7,560-pixel RGB and Infra Red sensor for metering, and it does a top job of accurately reading scenes. Autofocus is blisteringly quick, accurately locking on to fast-moving targets with ease – this is one area where technology has progressed and you can tell the EOS 750D apart from its predecessor.

With more and more photographers turning to digital SLRs for movie making, the EOS 750D has the essentials covered. There's Full HD 1080p available at 30, 25 and 23.98fps and 720p on tap at 59.94, 50, 29.97fps, respectively. The EOS 750D also features a video output, HDMI mini output and an external audio input with user-controllable levels – a nice touch that you wouldn't expect from an entry-level DSLR.

Another welcome addition is Wi-Fi and NFC. Previously reserved for Canon's more expensive models, the added connectivity on entry-level models makes sense. With people now becoming interested in photography by means of smartphones and Instagram, providing a camera that makes it easier to share images helps to bridge the gap between iPhoneography and using a 'proper' camera. Canon offers its own Camera Connect app too, which is free to download for iOS or Android devices.



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\*Quote by Darron Hartas former editor of Master Photographer magazine

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### NIKON Df + 50mm f/1.8G AF-S GOLD EDITION

In November 2014, Nikon Japan announced a very special limited-edition black and gold model of its Nikon Df camera. The new model was only available in Japan in limited quantities and was released by the end of the year. The body-only model was released in a limited run of only 600 units. The kit edition included a special gold version of the AF-S 50mm f/1.8G Nikkor in a 1,000-unit run. To pair with the limited-edition camera, Nikon also introduced a number of gold accessories, which include a gold shutter release AR-11G and a AN-DC9G matching strap.

With the Nikon Df Gold, Nikon opted for a much more subtle approach than they have done in the past with the Nikon FM Gold and Nikon FA Gold, only giving it a few gold accents where they would have the most impact. This subtlety also means Nikon's rendition is much more attractive and we are informed it was an immediate sell-out in Japan. Grays of Westminster are delighted to announce they have secured an example of this unique kit. NEW £5,000



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# ND GRADUATED FILTER SYSTEMS

GRADS ARE THE LANDSCAPER'S FAVOURITES – RECTANGULAR FILTERS USED WITH A SLOT-IN HOLDER TO PUT LIFE AND DRAMA INTO DULL SKIES. HERE, WE'VE TESTED SYSTEMS FROM FIVE LEADING MANUFACTURERS...

Test: RICHARD HOPKINS

**G**RADS ARE ABOUT controlling dynamic range – the range of tones from darkest black to brightest white that the sensor can record. Graduated Neutral Density filters, to give them their full name, are dark at the top and gradually fade to clear through the middle and bottom. Their main purpose is for darkening skies in landscapes that would otherwise be too bright – or even completely overexposed and blown to white because they've exceeded the dynamic range of the sensor.

Grads are available in a range of densities, commonly from one to three stops, and also in two transition options where the change from dark to clear is either very gradual (soft-cut grads) or more abrupt (hard-cut). As well as neutral grey, they can come in different colours too.

There are one or two circular screw-fit grads on the market, but the best and most popular type are rectangular, used with a slotted holder. The big advantage is the filter can be slid up and down to adjust position of the transition line. The holder attaches to the lens via an adapter ring and these are usually quickly detachable so one holder can be used on other lenses with different filter sizes. There are also wide-angle holders available with less filter slots so they don't protrude so far, or wide-angle adapter rings that allow the holder to sit closer to the lens, reducing the possibility of it encroaching into the image.

The two most popular rectangular filters systems are known as P-type using 84mm wide filters, and the larger 100mm-type, sometimes called Z-system. Most manufacturers cover both sizes and as a rule different brands of filter and holder can be used interchangeably. Some manufacturers also make smaller filters for CSC users, and at the other extreme, expensive jumbo-sized versions for big ultra-wide lenses.

The filters themselves are not glass, but made of dyed resin – a somewhat unpredictable process that can vary from batch to batch. The filters don't have any anti-reflection coatings, making them slightly more prone to scratching and also to flare and ghosting. That's not often a problem, more something to be aware of and worked around with slight reframing of the shot if needs be.

Apart from the French-made Cokin, all these filters are manufactured in Britain.

## HOW WE DID THE TESTS

● **DENSITY:** Measured at the darkest point, with results given in f/stops. Filters can also be marked with density expressed as a filter factor, or in optical density. So a one-stop filter could be marked as x2 or 0.3ND; two-stops as x4 or 0.6ND; three-stops as x8 or 0.9ND; and so on.

● **COLOUR:** All these filters have a very slight colour cast. Compared to neutral daylight at 5500K, an 'excellent' rating equates to a shift from neutral of under 200K – that's virtually undetectable in practice. 'Very good' is under 400K shift, difficult to see without a side-by-side comparison and suitable for very high quality work. 'Good' is up to 600K and that is noticeable, but often acceptable. 'Fair' is a shift of over 600K and needs adjustment in post-processing for best results.

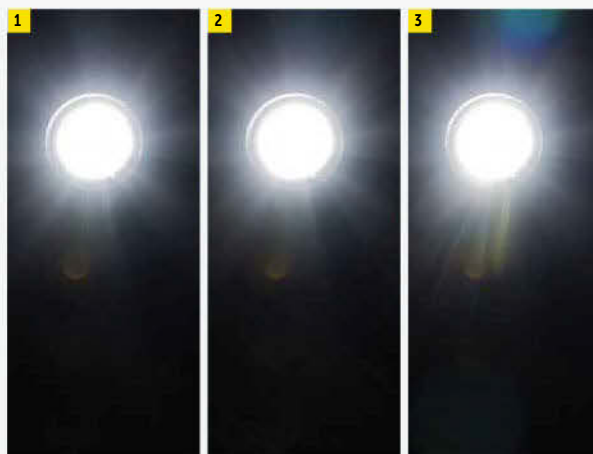
● **SHARPNESS:** Not usually an issue with filters, unless used with longer focal lengths that magnify optical imperfections. Fortunately, grads are never used with long lenses as the graduated effect reduces dramatically, becoming almost invisible above 100mm or so. Using a 50mm lens and Imatest's MTF lens testing procedure, the worst result was a totally insignificant 1.5% drop in sharpness.

● **FLARE:** Flare can be a problem with all filters, especially those without anti-reflection coatings – like all of these ND grads. Most noticeable is a tendency for blown highlights to spread out when very bright light sources are in the frame or just outside it, such as a sunset. Also, coloured flare spots can appear in the same situation. On the whole though, all these filters performed to a high standard and were all very similar, regardless of price.



## Flare resistance

To simulate a typical sunset, a desk-lamp was pointed towards the camera, placed in the corner of the frame. Shooting first without a filter (1), then with a high-quality multi-coated Hoya Pro-1 UV filter (2) for comparison, and then with each ND grad, positioned to shoot through the clear area. The uncoated grads all performed almost identically to the Lee shown here (3), introducing coloured spots and slight flaring around the edge of the lamp.



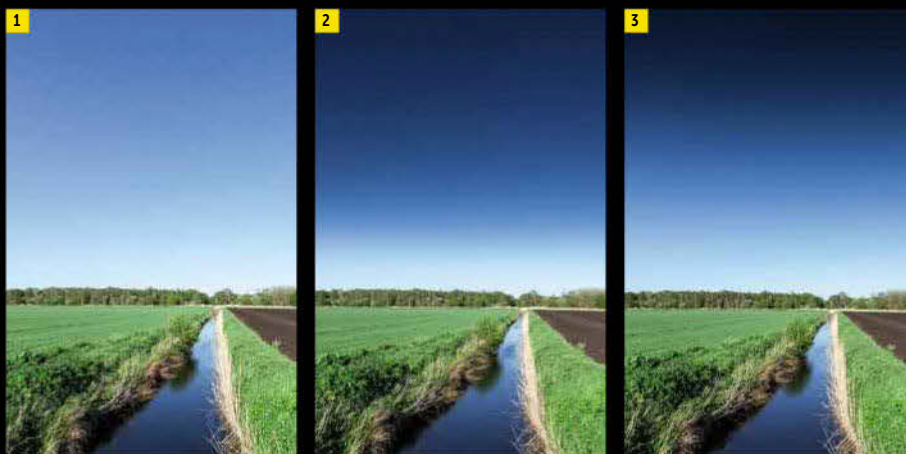




## Density & transition

Graduated filters are available in different strengths, and also with a hard-cut transition line, or soft-cut. In addition, the focal length of the lens has a big impact on how strongly the effect appears, with wide-angles showing most darkening (as illustrated), reducing significantly as focal length is increased. With telephoto lenses, the graduated effect becomes almost invisible. Lens aperture can make a difference too, with higher  $f$ /numbers showing more strongly. Use the lens stop-down button (if your camera has one) to preview the effect.

1) No filter 2) Two-stops hard-cut. 3) Three-stops soft-cut. These are Lee filters and the nature of the cut can vary slightly between brands.





## Cokin P-system (84mm)

Tested: 0.9ND soft-cut and 0.6ND hard-cut

Filter: £19 / Holder: £12 / 77mm lens adapter ring: £13

Contact: [www.intro2020.co.uk](http://www.intro2020.co.uk)



**F**ROM THE INVENTORS of the square slot-in filter concept, the Cokin system offers a very extensive filter range. It also offers a wide range of sizes, from the smallest A-type aimed at CSC users, with the medium size P-type (as tested) for general DSLR use. Then there's the larger 100mm size that Cokin calls Z-type for big wide-angle zooms, and the extra-large X-Pro series targeting users of ultra-wide lenses with bulbous front elements that can't take normal screw-in filters.

The standard Cokin P-type filter holder is moulded plastic, simple but effective, with slots for three filters. A wide-angle holder is available with just one slot that Cokin says should be okay with lenses down to 20mm focal length (on full-frame) compared to around 24-25mm for the standard holder. Lens adapter rings come in sizes from 48-82mm and simply clip into the rear. Changing the lens ring is easy enough as there's some flex in the holder allowing the retaining clip to be pushed back and the ring slid out. The three-stop ND grad supplied came with a little microfibre pouch for storage, while the 0.6ND grad came with microfibre-lined cardboard packaging that is intended to be re-used as a storage wallet. Okay, but not great.

The two filters tested were the three-stops soft-cut P121S and two-stops hard-cut P121M. Cokin calls this a medium-cut but it's close to what most manufacturers describe as their hard-cut flavour. Density checked out at 3.7 stops and 2.3 stops respectively and while that was measured in the darkest part at the top of the filter, those were the highest variations from spec we found. Colour neutrality rated as 'good' for the three-stopper and 'excellent' for the two-stops harder cut. Like all the filters, the Cokins were a little prone to flare but nothing serious. Sharpness was unaffected.



### VERDICT

Cokins do a decent job, though the colour was inconsistent and the densities on the high side. The holder is effective but basic, with prices a little higher than some other P-types.

Build quality	★★★★☆
Performance	★★★★☆
Value	★★★★☆
<b>Overall</b>	★★★★☆

## Formatt Hitech system (100mm)

Tested: 0.9ND soft-cut and 0.6ND hard-cut

Filter: £45 / Holder: £60 / 77mm lens adapter ring: £23

Contact: [www.formatt-hitech.com](http://www.formatt-hitech.com)



**I**F YOU'RE LOOKING for 100mm filters, but at a lower cost than Lee, Hitech is a popular option. Both brands have their devotees, some preferring the Hitech holder, as well as the prices. Hitechs come in an extensive range of sizes: 67mm, 85mm and 100mm (as here), 150mm and the Lucroit (165mm) system – for ultra-wide zooms like the Nikon 12-24mm that cannot use regular filters because of the bulbous front element.

The holder has a solid aluminium mounting plate, rather than the plastic used by others. There is no practical advantage to that, and it's slightly heavier, but it certainly conveys a nice impression of quality. On the front, there's a stacking system that allows the holder to be customised from one, two or three filter slots and a kit of brass screws is supplied for that very easy task. On the back, the lens adapter ring drops in, retained by a brass locking screw (as opposed to Lee's spring-loaded catch) that some feel is easier and more secure. It's a subjective choice really, though if you have a preference, as a rule all 100mm filters fit any 100mm holder. For ultra-wide lenses, a wide-angle adapter (illustrated) is available for £32.

The three-stop soft-cut ND grad measured exactly three-stops density, and the two-stop hard-cut came in at 2.1 stops. That's pretty much a perfect performance and while the exact density does not usually matter too much in practice, within reason, it's a good sign. Colour neutrality was more variable, with the hard two-stopper rating 'excellent' with almost exact neutrality, but the soft three-stop ND grad scored only 'fair' with a noticeable magenta cast. Sharpness was unaffected, and flare resistance was good – very much in line with others.



### VERDICT

A mixed performance from Hitech, with one filter bang on target specification and the other significantly off. The aluminium holder is a nice item, and Hitechs are great value.

Build quality	★★★★★
Performance	★★★★☆
Value	★★★★★
<b>Overall</b>	★★★★☆



## Kood P-system (84mm)

Tested: 0.6ND and 0.9ND soft-cut

Filter: £12 / Holder: £6 / 77mm lens adapter ring: £5

Contact: [www.koodinternational.com](http://www.koodinternational.com)



**K**OOD HAS BEEN struggling to keep up with demand, awaiting a new batch of hard-cut grads and only able to supply P-type soft-cut filters for this review. No problem though, that's enough to get a good impression of what's on offer and the shortages will be quickly rectified. The full Kood range includes smaller A-types and the larger 100mm-type, all British-made and at very competitive prices. For example, the Kood 100mm-type holder sells for £25, lens rings are £9, and the 100mm grads are just £20 each. That's way less than rivals, and the savings add up to a substantial amount by the time you've collected a few. The filters come in retail packaging of a clear plastic envelope lined with thin cardboard. Kood suggests to keep this as protective storage – functional perhaps, just about, but hardly ideal. Good and easily accessible storage is important with grads as by their nature it's hard not to leave finger marks that can get smeared across the surface when you put them away, almost guaranteeing flare problems.

The Kood holders are very like Cokin, made of precision-moulded plastic with the lens adapter ring clipping into the back, and out again, in the same way. In fact, the Kood and Cokin P filters, holders and adapter rings are interchangeable. The Kood holder illustrated is the wide-angle version with one filter slot, and it's slim enough to clear a 17mm lens (full-frame).

The three-stop soft filter measured 3.2 stops, and the two-stop soft 2.3 stops – both acceptably close to spec. Some cheaper grads have a reputation for poor colour neutrality, yet the three-stops filter rated 'very good' and the two-stops version scored 'excellent'. Sharpness was unaffected and resistance to flare is as good as any.



### VERDICT

Keen prices have always been Kood's ace card, and that certainly still applies. Yet the current Kood range is also high quality, competing with the best on this showing.

Build quality	★★★★☆
Performance	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
<b>Overall</b>	★★★★★

## Lee Filters (100mm)

Tested: 0.9ND soft-cut and 0.6ND hard-cut

Filter: £80-100 / Holder: £59 / 77mm lens adapter ring: £19

Contact: [www.leefilters.com](http://www.leefilters.com)

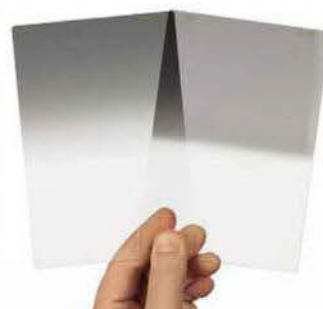


**A**SK ALMOST ANY keen landscape photographer, and they'll say the best filters are made by Lee. They might also add the most expensive, though that's because they're not just high quality, but consistently high quality. Lee's reputation is about both meticulous manufacture and also tight quality control. This ensures the filters you buy today are exactly the same as those a few years old that are a bit worse for wear.

Lee filters come in three sizes – the ever-popular 100mm-type illustrated, the smaller Seven5 range that is 75mm wide, and the giant 150mm wide SW150 range for ultra-wide zooms. Lee 100mm-type filters are 2.1mm thick, about 0.5mm more than the others, to help maintain surface flatness.

The Lee filter holder is one of the system highlights, made from high quality plastic with brass fittings, and thoughtfully designed with a lens ring released by a spring-loaded catch. The advantage here is the holder can be popped on and off very quickly and easily, without needing to remove the filter. Another feature, also shared with some other brands, is the filter slots can be customised to take either one, two or more filters. A wide-angle lens adapter ring (illustrated) is also an option at £37. Everything comes very well packaged in tough padded wallets with Velcro'd closures and an identification window.

The three-stops soft-cut grad measured at 2.8 stops actual density, and the two-stopper exactly two stops. The colour was very neutral too, with both the three-stops soft-cut filter and the two-stops hard-cut rating 'excellent' – Lee Filters is the only brand on test here to score an illusive double. Sharpness was unaffected and resistance to flare was good too.



### VERDICT

True to form, Lee scores highest on everything – except value! What you're paying for is not just the high quality, but also the consistency from filter to filter, and from batch to batch.

Build quality	★★★★★
Performance	★★★★★
Value	★★★★☆
<b>Overall</b>	★★★★★





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## SRB P-type (84mm)

Tested: 0.9ND soft-cut and 0.6ND hard-cut

Filter: £13.50 / Holder: £25 (with integral lens adapter ring) / Lens adapter: N/A

Contact: [www.srbphotographic.co.uk](http://www.srbphotographic.co.uk)



**S**RB HAS ITS roots in fine-engineering and is well known for lens adapters and other precision optical products, with filter systems being a relatively recent diversification. The filters are manufactured in the UK for SRB (no longer by Hitech) while SRB looks after the hardware side, and the quality of the holder is certainly a highlight. SRB offers two sizes of slot-in systems – the P-type reviewed here and the smaller A-type. The filters are nicely presented in a high quality padded pouch, with Velcro closure and a window for labelling. SRB offers several options of filter holder – the moulded plastic varieties that are basically the same as Cokin and Kood holders, or the more expensive machined aluminium Pro Holders. There are two choices here, with the wide-angle Pro Holder having one slot, and the standard holder (illustrated) with two slots, and that is slim enough to clear a 22mm focal length (full-frame). The Pro Holders are beautifully finished and unusual in having a smooth-rotating lens adapter ring built-in and non removable. It all works very nicely, but means a different holder is needed for different size lenses, which could soon get expensive.

On test, the SRB three-stops soft-cut filter had a measured density of 3.5 stops, and the two-stops filter checked at 2.1 stops – both pretty close to spec. Colour neutrality was less impressive though, with the SRB three-stops soft-cut filter rating only 'fair' with a significant blueish cast that really needed correcting in post-processing for best results. The SRB two-stop hard-cut filter came in closer to neutral, rating 'good'. There were no problems with sharpness for either filter, and flare resistance was also good – basically in line with all the other grads on test.



### VERDICT

SRB filters are presented in quality wallets, and the machined aluminium SRB Pro Holder is excellent. The 0.6ND performed acceptably well, but the off-colour three-stopper less so.

Build quality	★★★★★
Performance	★★★★☆
Value	★★★★☆
<b>Overall</b>	★★★★★

## Test conclusion



Kood P-system (84mm)



Lee Filters (100mm)

**W**E HAVE TWO winners, one each in P-type and 100mm-type, and at both extremes of the price range. There are some very good filters here, and you don't need to spend a fortune to get high quality. As a caveat though, it has to be said that the manufacturing process for grads is a tricky one, and is achieved mostly by hand-dipping the filters in dye, so some slight batch variation is inevitable.

Lee Filters is our Best Buy in the larger 100mm format, with first class colour neutrality and general image quality. The Lee Filters holder is another highlight with its spring-loaded release catch and customisable slots. You can't really go wrong with Lee, but at considerable cost.

Kood is our Best Buy P-type. On this showing, Kood competes well for accurate colour and overall image quality, at bargain value prices, and it's only the plastic holder and budget storage provision that lowers the score for build quality. Not that there's anything wrong with cheap plastic holders, nothing at all, just that they're not as nice to use as the more expensive aluminium ones.

All the other brands had mixed fortunes, usually with one filter scoring well, but the other letting the side down with a wayward colour cast. This can be corrected in post-processing, but it's an extra task that shouldn't be necessary. It's well worth looking out for starter kits offered by some manufacturers, with a handy cost saving. They include a filter holder and lens adapter ring, plus a small selection of popular grads.



# Sigma 150-600mm f/5-6.3 DG OS HSM/S

If you're looking for a lens with real pulling power, then this beautiful beast from Sigma could be what you need

Test: DANIEL LEZANO

## SPECIFICATIONS

Guide Price: £1,600 / Street Price: £1,500
Lens construction: 24 elements in 16 groups
Premium optics: Two FLD ('F' Low Dispersion) and three SLD (Special Low dispersion) glass elements
Number of diaphragm blades: Nine (rounded)
Minimum aperture: f/22
Minimum focusing distance: 2.6m
Maximum magnification: 1:5
Filter Size: 105mm
Dimensions: 121x290.2mm
Weight: 2,860g
AF Fittings: Canon, Nikon & Sigma
Supplied accessories: Tripod mount, lens hood, lens hood cover, carry case
Compatible teleconverters: Sigma 1.4x & 2x APO EX DG
Website: sigma-imaging-uk.com

WHILE THE MOST popular focal lengths of telezoom are 70-200mm and 70-300mm, there are specialist fields of photography, in particular sports and wildlife, that require even more power at the top end. There are a number of zooms covering decent 80/100/135-400mm from marques and independents and a few zooms touching 500mm too, but when even that's not enough, there are a handful of super-telezooms offering a very versatile range of 150-600mm. We tested Tamron's 150-600mm a year or so ago and it delivered an excellent performance on both full-frame and APS-C.

Recently, Sigma released two lenses with the same focal length, the £1,200 C-series (Contemporary) lens and this, the £1,600 S-series (Sports) lens. As well as the optics, the main difference between the two is the size, with the C-series lens being more compact and lightweight.

If you've never used a lens of this type before, its sheer length and weight may initially take you a little by surprise. Weighing a little under 3kg, it's not the sort of zoom that you want to be using handheld for too long. Those shooting sports and action will mostly use this on a monopod, while wildlife shooters will no doubt have the Sigma perched atop a decent head on a sturdy tripod.

In terms of finish, this Sigma is absolutely stunning with an all black barrel and premium build. Don't think just because it's not a marque lens that it's second best for build – as well as looking fantastic, this zoom is dust- and splash-proof and made to the highest standard. To ensure it can be used in poor conditions, even the optics have been treated, with a water- and



oil-repellent coating allowing the surface to be quickly and easily wiped clean.

The barrel design is excellent – the wide rubberised ring at the front controls the zoom, while the manual focus ring sits further back, next to the large focus distance window. Several controls are located on the left of the barrel, allowing you to change settings while keeping the right hand on the shutter button. The zoom lock prevents focal lengths being accidentally changed, while four other switches control focusing and optical stabilisation (see panel, right).

Our lens was used mounted on a Manfrotto 055CXPRO4 tripod using a Manfrotto gimbal head, which gave a secure support as well as making it relatively easy to shift position. We left the deep hood fitted at all times to minimise the risk of flare, with the stabiliser off while mounted.

The zoom ring has a smooth action and looking through the viewfinder, seeing the large shift in focal length is impressive. The latter can also be said for the autofocus, which is very positive and quiet. While we weren't able to test its tracking of fast moving subjects, it performed very well at locking on to static objects and following slow-paced subjects. Filter users will be pleased to know that the Sigma uses internal focusing.

Where the Sigma scores most highly is with image quality, with very high performance throughout the range of focal lengths. Even at maximum aperture, image sharpness is very impressive across the frame. It's easily the sharpest zoom of its type that we've tested. The optical stabiliser does a good job too – we noted around a 2.5-3-stop benefit when handholding the lens – although this is not something you'll want to do too often in truth, but it's a great back-up benefit to have available if needed.

The superb optics mean that chromatic aberrations aren't an issue, with the Sigma being practically devoid of this problem. Some light fall-off (darkening at the frame edges/corners) is evident when wide open but stop down a stop or two and it's avoided. As for diffraction, that's only an



## LENS CONTROLS

Four switches control key features, as follows:

- **FOCUS:** Along with AF and manual focus is Manual Override, allowing you to alter the AF point using the manual focus ring following AF.
- **FOCUS LIMITER:** Reduce AF hunting by setting the distance range the AF will cover.
- **OS:** Set the Optical Stabiliser to 1 (standard), 2 (when panning moving objects) or off.
- **CUSTOM:** Use along with Sigma's USB Dock (supplied separately) to create customised settings of factors like AF speed or OS.

issue at the minimum aperture of f/22 and even then it's not too bad.

Finally, it's worth praising the supplied case – as well as being of decent quality, it offers a shoulder strap, to make lugging this premium chunk of glass that little bit easier.

Overall, this lens is nothing short of an incredible accomplishment from Sigma.

## VERDICT

Any photographers looking for a far-reaching super-telephoto zoom has to put the Sigma at the top of the list. It delivers top quality in every area and covers a range marques have yet to reach. It's a big and heavy lump of glass and expensive too, but for versatility and performance, there is nothing else close.

Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Performance	★★★★★
Value	★★★★
<b>Overall</b>	<b>★★★★★</b>







**IN DETAIL**

IMAGE DETAIL: The Sigma's pulling power lets you fill the frame with the subject and capture it in incredible detail.





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28mm f/1.8 USM <b>£379.00</b>	600mm f/4.0L IS MK II <b>£8,895.00</b>	EF-S 55-250mm f/4.5-5.6 IS <b>£375.00</b>
28mm f/2.8 IS USM <b>£389.00</b>	800mm f/5.6L IS USM <b>£9,899.00</b>	28-300mm f/3.5-5.6 IS <b>£1,849.00</b>
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Blue Water	77mm

### For water without Coral

Green Water	100mmx100mm
Green Water	104mm Disc
Green Water	125mmx125mm
Green Water	27mm
Green Water	30mm
Green Water	30.5mm
Green Water	34mm
Green Water	37mm
Green Water	37.5mm
Green Water	40.5mm
Green Water	43mm
Green Water	46mm
Green Water	49mm
Green Water	52mm
Green Water	55mm

## INFRA RED 720nm Opt. GROUND GLASS

Infra Red	49mm
Infra Red	52mm
Infra Red	55mm
Infra Red	58mm
Infra Red	62mm
Infra Red	67mm
Infra Red	72mm
Infra Red	77mm
Infra Red	82mm

## Opt. GROUND GLASS 2 STOPS

ND4	27mm
ND4	28mm
ND4	30.5mm
ND4	34mm
ND4	37mm
ND4	37.5mm
ND4	40.5mm
ND4	43mm
ND4	46mm
ND4	49mm
ND4	52mm
ND4	55mm
ND4	58mm
ND4	62mm
ND4	67mm
ND4	72mm
ND4	77mm

## THREE STOP

ND8	37mm
ND8	40.5mm
ND8	46mm
ND8	49mm
ND8	52mm
ND8	55mm
ND8	58mm
ND8	62mm
ND8	67mm
ND8	72mm
ND8	77mm

## 4 STOPS

ND16	46mm
ND16	52mm
ND16	55mm
ND16	58mm
ND16	62mm
ND16	67mm
ND16	72mm
ND16	77mm
ND16	82mm

## Opt. GROUND GLASS

### 9 STOPS

ND 400	52mm
ND 400	58mm
ND 400	62mm
ND 400	67mm
ND 400	72mm
ND 400	77mm
ND 400	82mm

## Opt. GROUND

Polariser Linear	39mm
Polariser Linear	43mm
Polariser Linear	46mm
Polariser Linear	52mm
Polariser Linear	55mm
Polariser Linear	58mm
Polariser Linear	62mm
Polariser Linear	67mm
Polariser Linear	72mm
Polariser Linear	77mm
Polariser Linear	82mm
Polariser Linear	86mm
Polariser Circular	25mm
Polariser Circular	25.5mm
Polariser Circular	27mm
Polariser Circular	28mm
Polariser Circular	30mm
Polariser Circular	30.5mm
Polariser Circular	34mm
Polariser Circular	35.5mm
Polariser Circular	37mm
Polariser Circular	37.5mm
Polariser Circular	40.5mm
Polariser Circular	43mm

Polariser Circular	46mm
Polariser Circular	48mm
Polariser Circular	49mm
Polariser Circular	52mm
Polariser Circular	55mm
Polariser Circular	58mm
Polariser Circular	62mm
Polariser Circular	67mm
Polariser Circular	72mm
Polariser Circular	77mm
Polariser Circular	82mm
Polariser Circular	86mm

## Opt. GROUND CLOSE UP SETS +1, +2, +3

Close Up Set	37mm
Close Up Set	40.5mm
Close Up Set	43mm
Close Up Set	43.5mm
Close Up Set	46mm
Close Up Set	49mm
Close Up Set	52mm
Close Up Set	55mm
Close Up Set	58mm
Close Up Set	62mm
Close Up Set	67mm
Close Up Set	72mm
Close Up Set	77mm
Close Up Set	82mm made in China

## Opt. GROUND HALF DIOPTR

Split Field	49mm
Split Field	52mm
Split Field	55mm
Split Field	58mm
Split Field	62mm
Split Field	67mm

## Opt. GLASS VERY FINE ETCHED

Starburst 4X	27mm
Starburst 4X	28mm
Starburst 4X	30.5mm
Starburst 4X	34mm
Starburst 4X	35.5mm
Starburst 4X	37mm
Starburst 4X	40.5mm
Starburst 4X	43mm
Starburst 4X	43.5mm
Starburst 4X	46mm
Starburst 4X	49mm
Starburst 4X	52mm
Starburst 4X	55mm
Starburst 4X	58mm
Starburst 4X	62mm
Starburst 4X	67mm
Starburst 4X	72mm
Starburst 4X	77mm
Starburst 4X	82mm
Starburst 6X	27mm
Starburst 6X	28mm
Starburst 6X	30.5mm
Starburst 6X	34mm
Starburst 6X	37mm
Starburst 6X	40.5mm
Starburst 6X	43mm
Starburst 6X	46mm
Starburst 6X	49mm
Starburst 6X	52mm
Starburst 6X	55mm
Starburst 6X	58mm
Starburst 6X	62mm
Starburst 6X	67mm
Starburst 6X	72mm

Starburst 6X	77mm
Starburst 8x	37mm
Starburst 8x	49mm
Starburst 8x	52mm
Starburst 8x	55mm
Starburst 8x	58mm
Starburst 8x	62mm
Starburst 8x	67mm
Starburst 8x	72mm
Starburst 8x	77mm

## DIFFUSER

Soft Focus	49mm
Soft Focus	52mm
Soft Focus	55mm
Soft Focus	58mm
Soft Focus	62mm
Soft Focus	67mm
Soft Focus	72mm

## FOG OPTICAL GLASS

Fog	49mm
Fog	52mm
Fog	55mm
Fog	58mm
Fog	62mm
Fog	67mm
Fog	72mm

## Opt. DIOPTR WITH CENTER HOLE FOR SHARP CENTER

Centre Spot Clear	49mm
Centre Spot Clear	52mm
Centre Spot Clear	55mm
Centre Spot Clear	58mm
Centre Spot Clear	62mm

Multi Image	3x 49mm
Multi Image	3x 52mm
Multi Image	3x 55mm
Multi Image	3x 58mm
Multi Image	5x 52mm
Multi Image	5x 58mm

## Colours for B&W Ground optical glass

### ONE STOP

Yellow 2x	46mm
Yellow 2x	49mm
Yellow 2x	52mm
Yellow 2x	55mm
Yellow 2x	58mm
Yellow 2x	62mm
Yellow 2x	67mm
Yellow 2x	72mm
Yellow 2x	77mm
Yellow 2x	82mm
Yellow 2x	86mm

### ONE STOP

Y/G 2x	49mm Yellow Green
Y/G 2x	52mm
Y/G 2x	55mm
Y/G 2x	58mm
Y/G 2x	62mm
Y/G 2x	67mm
Y/G 2x	72mm

### ONE AND ONE THIRD STOP

Orange 2x	46mm
Orange 2x	49mm
Orange 2x	52mm
Orange 2x	55mm
Orange 2x	58mm

Orange 2x	62mm
Orange 2x	67mm
Orange 2x	72mm
Orange 2x	77mm
Orange 2x	82mm
Orange 2x	86mm

## TWO STOPS

Green 2x	46mm
Green 2x	49mm
Green 2x	52mm
Green 2x	55mm
Green 2x	58mm
Green 2x	62mm
Green 2x	67mm
Green 2x	72mm
Green 2x	77mm
Green 2x	82mm
Green 2x	86mm

## THREE STOP

Red 2x	46mm
Red 2x	49mm
Red 2x	52mm
Red 2x	55mm
Red 2x	58mm
Red 2x	62mm
Red 2x	67mm
Red 2x	72mm
Red 2x	77mm
Red 2x	82mm
Red 2x	86mm

## Conversion Filters

We are unable to replace these with Japanese filters - replacements will be UK Optical resin filters

## JAPANESE OPTICAL GLASS

80A	52mm	82B	67mm
80A	55mm	82B	72mm
80A	58mm	85A	49mm
80A	62mm	85A	52mm
80A	67mm	85A	55mm
80A	72mm	85A	58mm
80B	49mm	85A	62mm
80B	52mm	85A	67mm
80B	55mm	85B	49mm
80B	58mm	85B	52mm
80B	62mm	85B	55mm
80B	67mm	85B	58mm
80B	72mm	85B	62mm
80B	77mm	85B	67mm
81A	72mm	85B	72mm
81B	55mm	85B	77mm
81B	67mm	FLD	49mm
82A	49mm	FLD	52mm
82A	52mm	FLD	55mm
82A	55mm	FLD	58mm
82A	58mm	FLD	62mm
82A	62mm	FLD	67mm
82A	67mm	FLD	72mm
82A	72mm	FLW	49mm
82B	49mm	FLW	55mm
82B	52mm	FLW	58mm
82B	55mm	FLW	67mm
82B	58mm	FLW	72mm
82B	62mm		

# KOOD

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TRADE AND IMPORTERS CAN PAY BY





# KOOD



HIGH DEFINITION GRADIENTS FOR HIGH PIXEL COUNT SLR CAMERAS

- 1) KOOD uses small untoughened, thick Pilkington Optical Glass Mold's to produce the highest possible optically flat resin Filters without curvature to ensure infinity focus
- 2) Casting system eliminates all bleach so no loss of density or colour over time
- 3) Batch tested every 12 filters to maintain good neutrality
- 4) All filters packed in between card, in wallets which allow no movement or dust
- 5) KOOD Manufactures its own filters from casting to packing

## A FILTER TO FIT ALL COKIN A SIZE SYSTEMS



### A Filter Holder Set Adapter Rings Only Fit Kood Holder

A Filter Holder Cap  
A Filter Holder Hood  
A Adapter Ring 37mm  
A Adapter Ring 38.1mm  
A Adapter Ring 40.5mm  
A Adapter Ring 46mm  
A Adapter Ring 49mm  
A Adapter Ring 52mm  
A Adapter Ring 55mm  
A Adapter Ring 58mm  
A Adapter Ring 62mm

### GRADIENTS

0.3 ND Gradient Soft  
0.3 ND Gradient Hard Cut  
0.6 ND Gradient Soft  
0.6 ND Gradient Hard Cut  
0.9 ND Gradient Soft  
0.9 ND Gradient Hard Cut  
Light Blue Graduated  
Dark Blue Graduated  
Cool Blue Gradient  
Light Green Graduated  
Dark Green Graduated  
Light Mauve Graduated  
Dark Mauve Graduated  
Light Red Graduated  
Dark Red Graduated  
Light Tobacco Graduated  
Dark Tobacco Graduated  
Light Fog Graduated  
Strong Fog Graduated  
Light Yellow Graduated  
Dark Yellow Graduated  
Light Sunset Graduated  
Dark Sunset Graduated

### POLARIZERS

Linear Polariser Filter  
Circular Polariser Filter

### NEUTRAL DENSITY

Neutral Density 2  
Neutral Density 4  
Neutral Density 8

### STARS AND DIFFRACTIONS

Star x 4  
Star x 6  
Star x 6 with centre spot  
Star x 8  
Diffraction 2x  
Diffraction 36x  
Diffraction 4x  
Diffraction Star 4  
Diffraction Star 8  
Diffraction Square  
Diffraction Halo

### CLOSE UP'S

Close Up 1  
Close Up 2  
Close Up 4  
Split Field

### MULTI IMAGE AND SPEED

Multi Image 3  
Multi Image 5  
Multi Image 7  
Speed

### COLOURS

20 x Polyester colour set  
Yellow  
Orange  
Green  
Red  
Sepia  
Sky



## CONVERSION

20 x Wratten polyesters set

80A  
80B  
80C  
81A  
81B  
81C  
82A  
82B  
82C  
85A  
85B  
85C  
FLB  
FLW



## DOUBLE EXPOSURE AND MASKS

A Double Exposure  
A Double Mask 1  
A Double Mask 2  
A PSF



## DIFFUSERS AND FOGS

A light Diffuser  
A Strong Diffuser  
A Fog 1  
A Fog 2

## NETS

Net Blue  
Net Grey  
Net Green  
Net Orange  
Net Red  
Net Violet  
Net White



## SPOTS

Oval Spot Blue  
Oval Spot Clear  
Oval Spot Grey  
Oval Spot Red  
Oval Spot White  
Spot Blue  
Spot Clear  
Spot Grey  
Spot Green  
Spot Orange  
Spot Red  
Spot Violet  
Spot White  
Wide Spot Blue  
Wide Spot Clear  
Wide Spot Grey  
Wide Spot Green  
Wide Spot Orange  
Wide Spot Red  
Wide Spot Violet  
Wide Spot White



## P SYSTEM TO FIT ALL COKIN P SIZE SYSTEMS

### P Size Holder Kood Adaptor Filter Rings + Cokin Holders

P Adapter Ring 38.1mm  
P Adapter Ring 49mm  
P Adapter Ring 52mm  
P Adapter Ring 55mm  
P Adapter Ring 58mm  
P Adapter Ring 62mm  
P Adapter Ring 67mm  
P Adapter Ring 72mm  
P Adapter Ring 77mm  
P Adapter Ring 82mm



## GRADIENTS

0.3 ND Gradient Soft  
0.3 ND Gradient Hard Cut  
0.6 ND Gradient Soft  
0.6 ND Gradient Hard Cut  
0.9 ND Gradient Soft  
0.9 ND Gradient Hard Cut  
Light Blue Graduated  
Dark Blue Graduated  
Cool Blue Graduated  
Light Green Graduated  
Dark Green Graduated  
Light Grey Graduated

Light Mauve Graduated  
Dark Mauve Graduated  
Light Red Graduated  
Dark Red Graduated  
Light Tobacco Graduated  
Dark tobacco Graduated  
Light Yellow Graduated  
Dark Yellow Graduated  
Light Sunset Graduated  
Dark Sunset Graduated



## POLARIZERS

Linear Polariser  
Circular Polariser

## NEUTRAL DENSITY

ND400 9 Stops (Japanese Glass)  
available Round (Back Slot) Square  
(for use with PL, star etc)  
ND16 4 Stops (Japanese Glass)  
Neutral Density x2  
Neutral Density x4  
Neutral Density x8  
Neutral Density x8 (Glass)

## INFRA RED 720 P FILTER

Infra Red 720 Optical Glass

## STARS AND DIFFRACTIONS

Starburst x4  
Starburst x6  
Starburst x8  
Diffraction 2x  
Diffraction 36x  
Diffraction Double Halo  
Diffraction Halo  
Diffraction 4x Star  
Diffraction Filter DS8  
Diffraction Square



## CLOSE UP FILTERS

Close up +1  
Close Up +2  
Close Up +4  
Split Field

## COLOURS

Yellow  
Orange  
Green  
Red  
Skylight  
Sepia



## DIFFUSERS AND FOGS

Light Diffuser  
Strong Diffuser  
Light Fog  
Strong Fog

## CONVERSION FILTERS

80A  
80B  
80C  
81A  
81B  
81C  
82A  
82B  
82C  
85A  
85B  
85C  
FLD  
FLW  
FLB



## DOUBLE EXPOSURE

Double Exposure  
Solar Eclipse Filter

## SPOTS

Blue Clear Spot  
Clear Spot  
Green Clear Centre Spot  
Grey Clear Spot  
Orange Clear Spot  
Clear Oval Spot  
Grey Oval Spot  
White Oval Spot  
Red Clear Spot  
Violet Clear Spot  
White Clear Spot



## Z 100 MM FILTERS GRADIENTS 100 X 125MM

0.3 ND Gradient Soft  
0.3 ND Gradient Hard Cut  
0.6 ND Gradient Soft  
0.6 ND Gradient Hard Cut  
0.9 ND Gradient Soft  
0.9 ND Gradient Hard Cut  
Light Blue Graduated  
Dark Blue Graduated  
Light Green Graduated  
Dark Green Graduated  
Light Tobacco Graduated  
Dark tobacco Graduated  
Light Sunset Graduated  
Dark Sunset Graduated



## NEUTRAL DENSITY

Neutral Density 2  
Neutral Density 4

## DIFFUSERS AND FOGS

Diffuser Light  
Diffuser Strong  
Fog 1  
Fog 2

## COLOURS

Yellow  
Orange  
Red  
Green  
Sepia  
Skylight



## CONVERSION FILTERS

80A  
80B  
80C  
81A  
81B  
81C  
82A  
82B  
82C  
85A  
85B  
85C  
FLB

Spot Clear  
Spot Oval  
Spot White



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## Back Caps

Canon AF  
Canon FD  
M42 screw  
Sony/Min AF  
Sony NEX  
Minolta MD  
Nikon  
Olympus OM  
Olympus 4/3  
Olympus m 4/3  
Pentax K  
Yashica/Contax  
Fuji X  
Leica R  
Leica M  
Leica L39  
Samsung NX



## Body Caps

Canon AF  
Canon FD  
M42 screw  
Sony/Min AF  
Sony NEX  
Minolta MD  
Nikon  
Olympus OM  
Olympus 4/3  
Olympus M4/3  
Pentax K  
Contax/Yashica

## Adapters

### Camera - Lens Adapters

Can AF - FD  
Can AF - M42  
Can AF - Nikon  
Can FD - M42  
Oly M4/3 - CAF  
Olym 4/3 - Can AF [With aperture ring]  
Oly M4/3 - Nikon  
Oly M4/3 - Nikon [With aperture ring]  
Oly M4/3 - Leica M  
Sony/Min AF - MD  
Sony/Min AF - M42  
Minolta MD - M42  
Nikon - M42  
Pentax K - M42  
Sony NEX - Can AF  
Sony NEX - Sony/Min AF  
Sony NEX - Nikon AI  
Sony NEX - Nik AI and G  
Sony NEX - PK  
Sony NEX - Leica M  
Sony NEX - Can AF with aperture ring  
Yash/Can - M42

## C Mounts

Canon AF  
Canon FD  
M42  
Nikon  
Olympus OM  
C Mount Oly 4/3  
C Mount - Oly Micro 4/3  
Pentax K  
T2 Thread  
Sony NEX  
Can AF



## T2 Adapters

Can AF  
Can FD  
Konica  
Nikon  
Olympus OM  
Olympus AF  
Olympus 4/3  
Oly Micro 4/3  
Praktica B  
Sony/Min AF  
Minolta MD  
Pentax K  
Yashica Contax  
Yashica Contax AF



## Series 7

37mm  
46mm  
49mm  
52mm  
55mm  
58mm  
62mm  
67mm



## Reversing Rings

Can AF 52mm  
Can AF 58mm  
Can FD 52mm  
Can FD 55mm  
Yash/Cont 52mm  
M42 49mm  
M42 52mm  
M42 55mm  
M42 58mm  
Min MD 49mm  
Min MD 52mm  
Min MD 58mm  
Sony/Min AF 55  
Nikon 52mm  
Nikon 58mm  
Praktica B 49mm  
Pentax K 49mm  
Pentax K 52mm  
Pentax K 55mm  
Pentax K 58mm

## Camera Viewing accessories

Screen Hoods  
Canon 50D  
Canon 350D  
Canon 450D  
Nikon D70  
Nikon D80  
Nikon D300  
Full shield magnifying Screen Hoods  
Canon 50/70/500D  
Canon 550d/Nikon 500D  
Canon 60D/600D

## Eye Cups

Canon 550D type  
Nikon D300 type  
Chinon  
Fujica  
Nikon F type  
Praktica  
Prism Right Angle Viewer

## Shutter Release Items

10" Metal Cable Release  
18" Metal Cable release  
24" Metal Cable release  
36" Metal Cable release  
10" Vinyl Cable release  
18" Vinyl Cable Release  
20" Vinyl Cable release  
36" Vinyl Cable release  
20" Air release



## Camera Care Items

Medium: Hurricane Blower  
Large Blower Brush  
Medium Blower Brush  
Small Blower brush  
Lipstick Lens Brush  
Lens Tissues  
Small Micro Fibre  
Large Micro Fibre  
(Lens cloth)  
Lens Cleaning Solution  
4 Piece Cleaning set  
7 Piece Cleaning Set  
(In White Snap Box)  
2 x Silica Gel  
4 x Silica Gel  
3 x Digital Screen Protect  
(Squeegee and cleaning)  
Contact Cleaning Pen  
Red Eye Pen



## Camera Sling Strap

Concealed Wire, tripod  
Bush attach strap  
Double concealed wire strap  
Wrist strap bush fitting

## Comfort Straps

Backing, reverse quick release  
Catches Makes hand strap]  
Black  
Royal Blue  
For Canon  
For Nikon  
For Minolta  
For Minolta  
For Pentax  
For Olympus

## 30mm-38mm Wide Straps

Plain Black, embossed  
For Canon, embossed  
For Nikon, embossed  
For Minolta, embossed  
For Olympus, embossed  
For Pentax, embossed  
Hand Grip with Camera Platform  
Narrow black strap 25mm



## Loop Fitting Strap

Metallic Neck Strap  
Metallic Wrist Strap

## Rain Covers

Basic Rain Cover  
Large  
Medium  
Summer  
Winter



## Dark Room

16"x17" Changing Bag  
27"x29" Changing Bag#  
3"x45" Changing Bag  
10 piece Film Dev Kit  
14 Piece film and print Dev Kit  
Dark Room Apron  
Straight Tank Thermometer  
25mm Dial thermometer  
45mm Dial thermometer  
2 XS/Steel film Clips  
3 x Bamboo Print Tongs  
Print/film squeegee  
Univ Dev Tank 2 x Spirals  
35mm Dev Tank  
Spare Univ Spiral  
3 x 7"x10" Dev Trays  
3 x 12"x10" Dev Trays  
3 x 12"x16 Dev Trays  
3 x 16"x20" Dev Trays  
3 x 16"x20" Dev Trays



## Graduated Beakers with Handle

500cc  
100cc  
2000cc

## Graduated H/Duty Measures

50cc  
100cc  
250cc  
300cc  
650cc  
1000cc

## Safelights free standing Or wall fixing

Yellow  
Green  
Orange  
Red

## Flash Accessories

### Inverted cone attachment give soft daylight result for

Canon 420EX  
Canon 580EX  
Canon 380EX  
Nikon SB 600  
Nikon SB 900

## Diffusers

Canon 380EX  
Canon 420EX  
Canon 430EX  
Canon 540EX  
Canon 550EX  
Canon 580EX  
Canon 600EX  
Nikon SB600  
Nikon SB800  
Nikon SB900

For v Pop up Flash  
Soft Flash Elasticated Cover

## Flash Brackets

Straight Flash Bracket  
Angle Flash Bracket  
Pro Bracket 1  
Pro Bracket 2  
Pro Bracket 3  
Pro Bracket 5  
Pro Bracket 5  
Hot Shoe Co axial  
Hot shoe with lead  
Flash Slave Unit  
Flash Slave Unit with Sucker  
Flash Slave Nikon TTL



## Flash Leads Pc Pc

.05m Straight  
1m Straight  
3m Straight  
3m Straight  
5m Straight  
10m Straight  
3m Coiled  
5m Coiled



## Flash Leads PC- two pin AC

0.5m straight  
1m straight  
2m straight  
3m straight  
5m straight

## Film Items

Film Cement  
100 x super 8 splicing tape  
Super 8 Tape Splicer  
35mm Plastic reloadable  
Cassettes  
Film Cassette Opener  
Bulk Film Loader  
Attaché case 5 x .50 din mag  
Attaché Case up to 600 slides  
APS Film Case  
Daylight Slide Viewer  
3 x Mag Slide Viewer  
2 X Mag Slide Viewer  
Auto Slide Viewer  
5"x4" Slide Sorter  
6"x10" Slide Sorter  
Box of 6 Acrylic Slide panels  
Twin 50 Din Mag  
Twin 50 CS Mag  
Hanimax Randal Mag  
Hanimax Straight  
Kodak Carousel c/w lid



## Filter Accessories/Rings

2x Filter Wrench 48 - 58mm  
2x Filter Wrench 62 - 77mm  
Folding Filter Pouch 4 x - 86mm  
Folding Filter Pouch 4 x - 67mm  
Folding Filter Pouch 9 x - 86mm  
Folding Filter Pouch 9 x - 67mm

## Filter Rings with Ret also can be used as distance rings - black

25.5mm  
27mm  
28mm  
30mm  
30.5mm  
34mm  
35.5mm  
37mm  
37.5mm  
40.5mm  
43mm  
46mm  
48mm  
49mm  
52mm  
55mm  
58mm  
62mm  
62mm deep  
67mm  
72mm  
72mm deep  
77mm  
82mm  
86mm  
95mm  
105mm  
127mm



## Filter Ring rotating c/w retainer

46mm  
52mm  
55mm  
58mm  
62mm  
67mm  
72mm  
77mm  
82mm  
86mm



## Lens Hood

### Collapsible rubber

40.5mm  
43mm  
46mm  
49mm  
52mm



55mm  
58mm  
67mm  
72mm  
77mm

## Wide Angle

49mm  
52mm  
55mm  
58mm  
62mm  
67mm  
72mm  
77mm



## Combi Two stage WA - Tele

49mm  
52mm  
55mm  
58mm  
62mm  
67mm  
72mm  
77mm



## Non Collapsible Lens Hood

### Petal Hood Screw fit can be Rotated to centralise

49mm  
52mm  
55mm  
58mm  
62mm  
67mm  
72mm  
77mm



## Metal

27mm  
28mm  
30mm  
30.5mm  
34mm  
37mm  
40.5mm  
43mm  
46mm  
48mm  
82mm  
Leica type Metal Hoods  
37mm  
39mm  
40.5mm  
43mm  
49mm  
Fuji X



## Lens Caps

### Snap Caps

27mm  
28mm  
30/30.5mm  
34mm  
37mm  
40.5mm  
43mm  
46mm  
48mm  
49mm  
52mm  
55mm  
58mm  
62mm  
67mm  
72mm  
77mm  
82mm  
86mm  
95mm  
105mm



### With center grips

49mm  
52mm  
55mm  
58mm  
62mm  
67mm  
72mm  
77mm



### White Balance Snap Caps

52mm  
55mm  
58mm  
62mm  
67mm  
72mm  
77mm  
82mm





#### Lens Pouches

##### With draw string

75x90mm  
75x110mm  
90x140mm  
90x170mm  
90x200mm

##### Zippered lid and filter compartment

Small  
Medium  
Large  
Extra large

#### Shoe Fitting Spirit Levels

2 Way  
2 Way for Sony  
3 Bubble  
3 Bubble for Sony



#### Stepping Rings

Stepping Ring 25-28mm  
Stepping Ring 25-30mm  
Stepping Ring 25-37mm  
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28mm 4 Section Carbon Fibre with Ball  
Pad Foot  
32mm 4 Section Carbon Fibre with Ball  
Pad Foot  
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level Geared centre col. Plus case  
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26mm three section  
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30mm series 0

36mm series 0  
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120mm 3 Way  
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Std BS small  
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Quick release, lens Gear Belt

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KM1 KM2 KM3

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LENS Gear Belt  
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Platform with 40cm Rods  
L connector  
Z Connector

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Rig 2 With Top Handle  
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Top Handle KF 1, KM1



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**2015 Dates £99**

April 19th, May 17th; Golden Eagle will fly, and perch in carefully chosen natural settings. Jesses hidden for static shots. Controlled flying. Also selection from; Owls, Buzzard, Hawks, Goshawk Max. 8 photographers.

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### Big Cats at WHF, Smarden in Kent

**£149**

March 21st, 28th. April 11th, May 9th; Up close to African Lions, Bengal + Siberian + Sumatran Tigers, Serval, Cheetah, Pumas, Jungle Cat, Amur & Snow Leopards, Black Leopards, Clouded Leopards, Fishing Cat. Large open enclosures. UK's most popular photo workshop. Really special photo opportunities from just inches away. Two sets of Lion Cubs born July & August 2013. Huge natural enclosure. Max 12 clients.

### Big Cats at WHF, Smarden in Kent

**- Specialist event for just 6 photographers - includes Jaguar £199**

April 8th, 9th, 10th; Full day as above, but with additional space at each enclosure. Time is also put aside to review your photos at lunchtime. One to one tuition throughout this very special day. You will see all the animals as above and you will have more personal interaction with the cats. Now including Jaguar.

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### Gorillas & African Safari Experience, Port Lympne

**£149**

March 22nd, May 3, 10, 31st; 3 gorilla sessions. No wires, fences or bars throughout the day. Clean backgrounds plus Privileged Access. Photograph at eye level over moat. Huge male silverbacks + family group. Private VIP Safari for 2.5 hours. Rhinos, Wildebeest, Eland, Zebras, Giraffes, Buffalo, Ostriches, Deer.

### Birds of Prey Workshop, Bedford

**£99**

April 25th, 26th; Private flying displays on pre-determined flightpath helps you to focus on birds in flight. Excellent opportunities with carefully chosen backgrounds. Also static shots in outstanding wooded locations. Jesses carefully hidden. This location boasts one of the largest collections of Birds of Prey in the UK. White tailed Sea Eagle, Bald Eagles, Hawks, Owls, Falcons, Kestrels, Buzzards and Long Eared Owl (new).

### Foxes, Otters, Wildcats, Badgers & more, Surrey.

**£139**

July 6th, 7th, 8th; Inside enclosures 'til sunset. Also Owls, Snakes, Badgers, Polecats, Weasels, Hedgehog, Harvest Mice & various Deer. This is possibly England's longest established photographic venue. 2 sessions with the foxes, sometimes only inches away from you. Time is spent inside enclosures with Foxes, Otters & Scottish Wildcats. Badgers GUARANTEED. No fences or wires to shoot through for any subject today.

### Small Cats Workshop, Welwyn, Herts.

**£99**

April 22, 23rd; Privileged access to Snow Leopards, Amur Leopards, Pumas, Caracal, Leopard Cat, Lynx, Servals, Golden Cat. As featured on recent series of TV programs on Animal Planet. Small groups. Tuition

### Bass Rock Gannets

**£185**

June 5, 7, 11, 21st; Private boat. Exclusive use of island for just 10 photographers. 50,000 pairs of nesting gannets on one small island. 4.5 hours photography. Amazing close-ups & fantastic flight shots. Large crate of fish fed to gannets as they dive into the sea. An amazing sight that you will never forget.

### Gannets diving off Bass Rock

**£99**

June 19th; Fantastic new workshop for 2014. We sail round Bass Rock without landing on the island. A whole hour of throwing fish into the sea for the Gannets to catch. Amazing diving shots. 1,000 + dives. Tuition.

### Farne Islands Puffins (Over 5 hrs photography)

**£89**

June 6th, 10th, 17th, 20th; 20 species of birds. 50,000 puffins. Guillemots, Razorbills, Shag, Arctic Tern colony etc. You will get unbelievably close to some of the species. Get that much sought after shot of Puffins with their beaks crammed full of sand eels. Tips and Tuition. Approximately 5 hours photography.

### Pro Birds of Prey Shoot, Bamburgh, Northumberland.

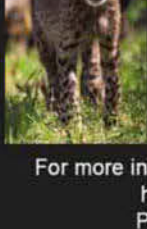
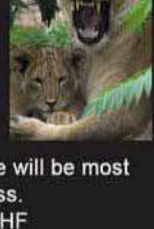
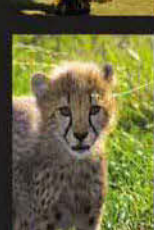
**£139**

June 13th, 14th; Amazing photography opportunities. Hill top views overlooking large extensive valleys and seascapes. Rocks and gorse bushes abound. Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Snowy Owl, Eagle Owl and Barn Owl will be placed in really natural situations. Jesses will be hidden where possible for those perfect "in the wild" shots. Can combine with Bass/Farne as this location is very close to the Farne Islands.

### Pro Birds of Prey Shoot (2), Bamburgh, Northumberland.

**£139**

June 4th, 8th, 12th, 16th; New venue. Both the falconer and the birds are different to workshop above. Venues are about 20 miles apart. We will take two of the birds down to an amazingly beautiful, little known waterfall. This will provide a unique backdrop for your subjects. The falls are surrounded by trees covered with mosses and lichens. We will photograph up to 10 different species, mainly British. Maximum 8 photographers.





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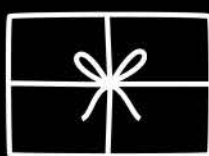
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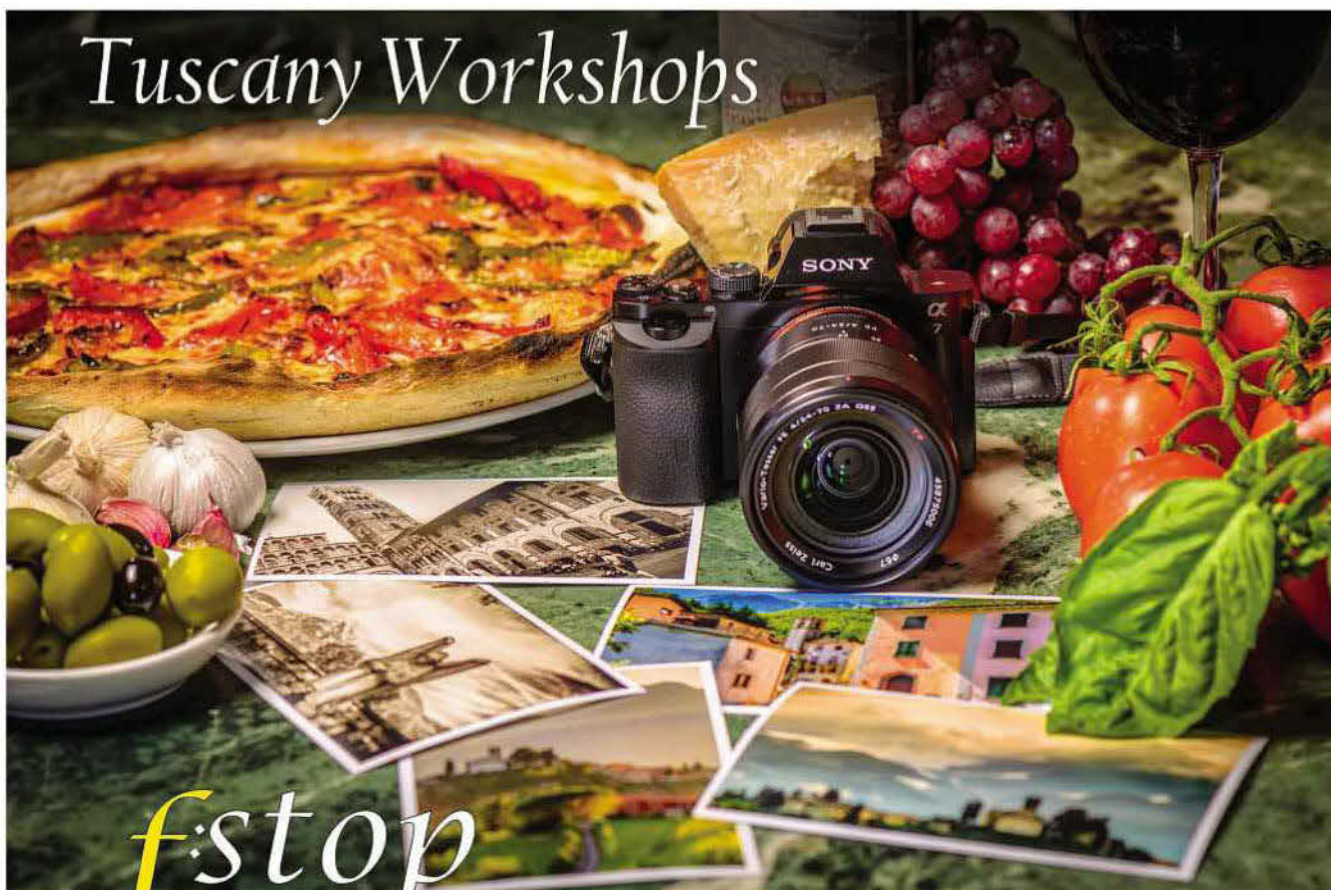
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